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FORTY YEARS WITH BAPTIST PIONEERS IN SOUTH IDAHO

A History of Baptist Work in the Area from 1864 to 1904

A Thesis

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in the

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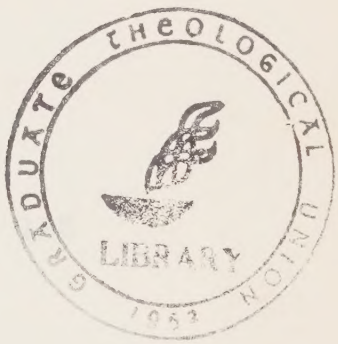

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SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS

	Page
Bibliography	iv
Summary of Thesis and Introduction	vii
Dedication	x
Chapter I THE APIARIST AND MISSIONARY Rev. Hiram Hamilton's work at Idaho City and Boise, 1864-1867	1
Chapter II A FAITHFUL HUSBANDMAN Rev. B. F. Morrow's Work at Dixie, Bluff Station, Mann's Creek The New Hope Church The First Idaho Association.	28
Chapter III THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BOISE Seven years without a worker J. B. Foster organizes church Seven more discouraging years Rev. J. D. Pierce reorganizes work Rev. L. L. Shearer's pastorate	51
Chapter IV THE COMING OF THE RAILROADS The work at Eagle Rock (Idaho Falls) as started by Mrs. Rebecca Mitchell Mrs. Susan Holbrook and the Blackfoot church The Wood River Country and Bellevue The New Hope Church moves to Caldwell Riverside Church Bluff Station gives way to Payette Weiser Church established.	69
Chapter V WILLIAM HOWARD BOWLER Early life Bowler comes to Bellevue Begins work at Soldier Journey to Lost River The Shoshone Church The Adam Iflands and the Berean Church at Picabo Carey entered The Hailey Church Hagerman Valley His two-week's schedule The Association meeting at Bellevue Bowler goes to larger work.	113

Page

Chapter VI THE LAST YEARS IN FORTY YEARS OF GROWTH 141

The Boise Church
New Churches organized: Boise Valley and Nampa
Salubria and Middle Valley
E. N. Elton's Work
Developments in other churches: Blackfoot, Eagle Rock, Pocatello, Caldwell, Payette Weiser
The Cooperative Agreements
Report to Home Mission Society, 1904
Conclusion

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Summary of Contents and Introduction

Whatever may be said about the evils of gold, the presence of gold in "them thar hills" of Idaho is largely responsible for the fact that Baptist work in Southern Idaho dates from the spring of 1864.

This history of Baptist work in the State for the next forty years revolves largely around the lives of eight pioneer Baptist ministers: Hiram Hamilton, B. F. Morrow, S. W. Applegate, J. B. Foster, Dwight Spencer, W. H. Bowler, L. W. Gowen, and E. N. Elton. Largely to these men should go the credit for the fact that Baptist work is firmly established today in the State. This history is an attempt to tell of their work, and to preserve in more accessible form some of the primary source materials which they left to posterity. This latter reason accounts for the unusually large number of quotations included in the history. It was felt that by quoting extensively there could be presented in an organized fashion a compendium of the primary source materials available. Thanks to the work of W. T. S. Spriggs, a former pastor of the Nampa Church, this was not nearly as difficult as it would have been otherwise. Indeed, this thesis in its present form could not have been written by its author, as limited as he has been in time and opportunity for first-hand research, if it had not been for Spriggs' work. Notwithstanding Spriggs' work, the author estimates that the thesis represents at least 1,000 hours of research, investigation and writing, and at least $150 in expenses.

In the Spring of 1860 a party of six men led by Lady "Jane", an Indian guide, discovered gold on the Oro Fino, a branch of the Clearwater River in North Idaho. The news spread like wild fire, especially when one of the party showed up in Portland, Oregon, with $800 worth of gold-dust. The camp site of the party soon became Pierce City, and all of that part of the state was scoured during 1861 by a gold hungry mob of prospectors and adventurers. By 1862 the center of the gold hunting hoards was Florence, Idaho, and from there they quickly spread further south toward the Salmon River.

It was while working in the Salmon River mines that Moses Splawn was visited by a Bannock Indian who took an interest in looking at the gold taken from the ground. One night at camp the Indian told Splawn that in a basin of the mountains far to the south he, as a boy, had picked up chunks of the yellow metal such as he had seen worked out of the gravel. He so described the place that Splawn with a party of prospectors discovered the Boise Basin diggings in 1862.

Another stampede was on--this time into Southwestern Idaho. By the summer of 1863 the population of Boise Basin, as this spot came to be called, was 15,000, mostly men. Idaho Territory was cut away from Washington Territory and was organized by an act of Congress, approved by Abraham Lincoln, on March 3, 1863. This act not only created a territorial legislature, but also served as a constitution for the booming territory. When the Idaho Territory was organized there was just one county for all of what is now Southern Idaho,

i.e. Boise County. The northern boundary of this county was fixed as an east and west line running from the head of the Payette River to the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Snake River on the west. It is the territory in this first county in Southern Idaho with which we are concerned in this history.

In 1863 the territorial legislature of Idaho created another county for Southern Idaho by dividing Boise County at the Snake River and calling all lands to the south of the river in the territory Owyhee County. But most of the early Baptist history in the State took place in Boise County after the division. In Boise County of 1863 was located Boise Basin, the Boise Valley, The Payette and Weiser Valleys, as well as the Wood River Country.

Before allowing the reader to plunge into the story of Baptists in Idaho, we must make some further acknowledgments. Besides Rev. W. T. S. Spriggs, the author wishes to thank his sister, Priscilla Gipson, who painstakingly copied all of the material collected at State Headquarters so that we would have it available first hand. Miss Maud A. Haycraft and Dr. R. P. Douglass at Baptist State Headquarters have been most cooperative. Dr. W. H. Bowler and his brother, Rev. H. R. Bowler, and Dr. Coe Hayne have also been most helpful. Also, a word of thanks should go to the pastors of the State who have taken an interest in the work, and helped greatly in securing data on their own churches.

Dedicated to all those who labored for Christ and the Baptist cause in pioneer Idaho.

1. Spriggs, W. T. S., A History of Baptists in Southern Idaho, Mss. p. 15.

Chapter I

THE APIARIST AND MISSIONARY,

Hiram Hamilton

Baptists have reason to be proud of the fact that among the flood of adventurers who were drawn to Boise County were two Baptist ministers: Hiram Hamilton and B. F. Morrow. Hiram Hamilton came as a representative of the American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York, and B. F. Morrow came to seek his fortune--but both labored equally well at the King's Business. It is the story of the former that we will discuss first.

Fortunately for the cause of Christ in Idaho, the excitement and fever connected with the discovery of gold there meant something else to the American Baptist Home Mission Society--it meant an opportunity to open new fields of work in the west. That the home mission board was awake to what was happening is proved by a letter written to W. T. S. Spriggs by one of the society's secretaries, Miss Brown, January 15, 1923, quoting the report of the board for 1864:

> "If we look to the extreme westward we behold the most wonderful development known in the history of this country. Within the last four years five new territories have been organized, occupying an area of over 1,316,000 square miles. Idaho alone embraces 326,000 square miles, enough to make eleven states as large as New York."[1]

Whether the Board or Hamilton took the initiative in arranging for mission work to be started in Boise County, Idaho, seems impossible to say after eighty years, but the

2. Minutes of American Baptist Home Mission Society, March 31, 1864.

fact remains that the Board officially recognized the need and challenge of South Idaho in 1864 and appointed the Rev. Hiram Hamilton of California as their missionary to this territory. While they deserve recognition for their foresight in taking up work in a field within a year after the territory was founded, the terms of the appointment under which Hamilton went to Idaho were not so much to their credit as the following item shows:

> "March 31, 1864. Resolved: That Hiram Hamilton be appointed our missionary to Bannock City and vicinity, Idaho Territory, for twelve months from May 1, 1864, at a salary of $1800 on condition that he obtain $1,100 of this amount on his field to our credit."[2]

While doubtless the Board was hard-pressed for money at this time, the policy of having their missionary "work his way" almost proved to be disasterous from the viewpoint of early Idaho work as we shall see later.

Hiram Hamilton, the man chosen by the Board for the first official work in Southern Idaho by Baptists, was a man eminently well qualified for this work by reason of his background. He was born on Christmas Day, 1820, in Portage County, Ohio. At the age of 23 he was baptized into the Baptist Church at Napoleon, Michigan, and was later licensed to preach by that church. He attended Madison University, but graduated from the University of Michigan in 1849, obtaining his B. A. degree. He also took some work at Hamilton Theological Seminary. In 1850 he crossed the plains to California and immediately became active in Christian work there. For eight years after his arrival in California

3. Spriggs., op. cit., p. 15.

4. Boise News, May 21, 1864, as quoted in Spriggs, ibid., p. 16.

he was head of the first Protestant female seminary in that State. In 1855 he was ordained by the San Jose Baptist Church and served as its pastor for six months, 1855-56. The minutes of the San Francisco Baptist Association show that Hamilton was clerk of the First Baptist Church of Stockton in 1862-63. Not only was he a pioneer (crossing the plains only one year behind the '49ers) but he was also an educated man, which fact served him in good stead in the pioneer boom towns of Idaho Territory.[3]

The story of Hiram Hamilton's work in Idaho is to be found almost exclusively in the pages of two early papers published in Boise County, The Boise News, and the Idaho Statesman. The Boise News was the newspaper of Idaho City, the Idaho Statesman the newspaper of Boise City. The Boise News heralds Hamilton's arrival with the following interesting article appearing in the issue of May 21, 1864:

> "BEES--Rev. Dr. Hamilton, a well known apiarist from Stockton, California, who arrived in this city last Saturday (May 14) brought with him two hives of bees. They came all the way overland via Washoe, Humboldt, Queen's River, and Jordan Creek. And notwithstanding the length of the trip and the roughness of the road, Mr. Hamilton assures that his bees are in excellent condition. They will probably be turned to pasture on the rich blooms of Boise Valley during the summer. The experiment will test the adaptability of this climate to bee culture."[4]

Mr. Hamilton apparently set out on May 1, 1864, the day his appointment from the Home Mission Society began, if he reached Idaho City by May 14, and he lost no time in getting to work when he arrived, for the religious notices for Saturday, May 21, in The Boise News reads:

5. Ibid.

6. Boise News, June 4, 1864, as quoted in Spriggs, ibid., p.17.

> "There will be Baptist preaching by Rev. Hamilton, late of Stockton, California, at Mr. Kingsley's church at 7 o'clock tomorrow evening. Mr. Hamilton comes to us a missionary from The Home Mission Society and has taken this Basin as his field of labor, dividing his time between this place, Placerville, Centerville, and Pioneer."[5]

Although Mr. Hamilton said nothing of his long hard journey from California, he did bring a hair-raising story with him of what happened to a party going over the same route that he came over, a week before. The Boise News reports it as follows:

> "A party of seven men.....left Humboldt City in the latter part of April.....While encamped 60 miles west of Paradise Valley on the 3rd of May they were attacked early in the morning by Indians.....Considering themselves out of danger they stopped, and while unpacking found themselves surrounded by from 50-100 Indians. J. W. Dodge and J. W. Borton were killed instantly.....For these particulars we are indebted to the Rev. Hamilton.[6]

It took something of the pioneer spirit to make a missionary out of a man in those times.

The reader doubtless noticed that Hamilton found a church already erected in Idaho City when he arrived, for the clipping which we quoted above speaks of "Baptist preaching by Rev. Hamilton...at Mr. Kingsley's church." Since Mr. Hamilton became very intimately connected with this church, it is necessary for us to double back on ourselves a bit and discover how it came into being.

Rev. W. T. S. Spriggs in his manuscript on file with the Baptist State Headquarters at Salt Lake City, gives in detail the background of Rev. C. S. Kingsley, in whose church Hamilton preached. Elder Kingsley was a man prominent in

7. Ibid., p. 11.

8. Boise News, November 14, 1863.

Methodist circles of Portland from about 1851 on. Sometime in the latter part of 1863 he seems to have left Portland for the Boise Basin. The Boise News of November 21, 1863, carried the following announcement: "Rev. C. S. Kingsley of Portland will preach at Union Hall, Montgomery Street, tomorrow at half past ten."[7] Kingsley seems to have been the first Protestant preacher in the basin, although the Catholics had been in Idaho City for sometime when Kingsley arrived, for the earliest edition of The Boise News of October 27, 1863, on file with the Historical Society in Boise contains an announcement of Catholic services under the leadership of Rev. Mr. Ludwig, assisted by the Rev. A. Z. Poulin and Rev. Mr. Mesplie. They dedicated a church on November 15, 1863, according to The Boise News.[8] Thus Kingsley arrived the week after the Catholics erected their church.

He seems to have met with a good response from his preaching, for a letter of his written to the Pacific Advocate on December 28, 1863, from Bannock (Idaho City), Idaho, speaks of preaching to 150-200 persons once each Sunday and of negotiating for the purchase of a lot for a church to go up in the Spring of 1864. Kingsley lost no time in getting this projected church under way, for The Boise News of January 9, 1864, reports that "Elder Kingsley and a party went into the woods and got out timber for the foundation of a M. E. Church to be built in the Spring."

On March 5, 1864, The Boise News carried the following item on Kingsley's church:

9. Boise News, March 5, 1864, as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 14.

> "The large building between Montgomery and State Streets on Commercial, now receiving the roof is the Methodist Church. The Auditory, is 36x56, 16 feet high. It will seat between 400 and 500. The public are mainly indebted to the efforts of Rev. Kingsley for the enterprise.....It will be dedicated about the tenth of next month."[9]

First services were held in the church on April 24, 1864, and on the following Sunday a Sunday School was organized. Thus, the church had not been in use a month when Hamilton arrived on the scene and started holding services in it.

Hamilton and Kingsley seem to have cooperated in the affairs of the church (Kingsley's church) from the moment Hamilton arrived on the scene. Whether due to greater ability and force of character or whether for other reasons, Hamilton soon became the leader in church affairs. While the church building had been erected and was being occupied, it was far from being finished or paid for, and to this task Hamilton seems to have applied himself with zeal. Both men got under the load, at least for a while, for the next appearance of the church in the news is a report from Hamilton and Kingsley on the proceeds from a concert held for the benefit of the church. The concert was a great success, raising $593 for the church, and both men expressed themselves as wanting to "extend our thanks to the singers, etc." So they made quite a start toward raising the $3100 debt on the church in a short time.

However, that very week Kingsley left the Basin for Portland, and before going apparently he had turned the work and the church over to Hamilton. Just what arrangements were

10. Boise News, July 16, 1864, as quoted by Spriggs, p. 21.

11. Boise News, July 23, 1864, as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 21.

made was not stated. At any rate, after this it is no longer Kingsley's church in the paper, but the "Protestant Church", and finally, the "Baptist Church."

Under date of July 16, 1864, we also find mention of Hamilton's bees. They seem to have emulated their keeper, for they were already producing enough honey so that Hamilton could make "a present of nice pure honey.....product of his own bees on Buena Vista Bar" to the editor. "Mr. Hamilton arrived with two swarms, he now has four and another somewhere in the woods."[10]

July 23, 1864, it is announced that there will be "Preaching at the Protestant Church by Rev. Hamilton in the morning and by Rev. Beachman (C. P.) in the evening." Hamilton also announces a "Sunday School at Buena Vista at 9 a.m. and in the church at 2 p.m."[11]

Thus within six weeks after his arrival Hamilton had full charge of the church and Sunday School in Idaho City, and had started a second one in Buena Vista where he had his bees. Surely he wasted no time in establishing the work of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in the Basin!

Nor was he long content to rest on the matter of the church debt, for we read in The Boise News for August 6, 1864, that

> "The ladies of Idaho City met in the Baptist Church, formerly Kingsley's, on Commercial Street on Friday evening, Mrs. Kelley in the chair, to take into consideration the best means of raising a fund to relieve the church of debt. It was

12. Ibid., p. 22.

.....

13. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 67, Number 8 (September 14, 1930) Section 2, p. 2.

> resolved that a ladies' Fair be held in the church, commencing on Tuesday next and to continue for three or four days. They adopted the name, "Ladies Mite Society". In the meantime it is their purpose to issue a newspaper to be called The Ladies' Mite composed entirely of original articles written by the ladies of Idaho City." 12

That Hamilton was the instigator of this organization we know from some extracts taken from the minutes of this organization and published in the Idaho Statesman for September 14, 1930. A daughter of Hamilton, living in Alameda, California, discovered the minute book and sent it to the Historical Society in Boise, and the Idaho Statesman heard about it and reported as follows:

> "The minutes of the Society for August 5, 1864 contain the statement by Rev. Hamilton to the effect 'that there was a debt of about $3,000 due on the church and that he (Rev. Hamilton) had purchased said church and parsonage of Rev. C. S. Kingsley for the use of the Baptist Home Mission Society.' The debt of $3,000 was to be paid off by May 1, 1865.
>
> "The minutes break off August 15, 1864 although Rev. Hamilton wrote in a letter about that time that the fair netted $700.
>
> "Officers of the Ladies Mite Society were:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | President | Mrs. Kelley |
> | Vice President | Mrs. Pinney |
> | Treasurer | Mrs. Goodell |
> | Secretary | Rev. Hiram Hamilton |
> | Editoresses | Mrs. Butler & Miss Rees."13 |

The article in the Statesman closes with a list of members. Thus we are indebted to this article for informing us of what the arrangements were between Kingsley and Hamilton, and this serves to substantiate a statement made by Hamilton in his report to the Home Mission Society, read at the

14. Minutes, Annual Meeting, American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1865) as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 31.

15. Boise News, August 13, 1864, as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 23.

16. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 1, Number 14 (August 25, 1864) p. 2.

17. Ibid., Volume 1, Number 21 (September 10, 1864), p. 2.

18. Minutes, San Francisco Baptist Association, 1864, as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 24.

annual meeting, that he "organized a church of six members and purchased a church edifice and parsonage."[14]

In the August 13, 1864, issue of The Boise News we read that

> "The Ladies Mite, a spicey little sheet made its appearance Wednesday.....In less than three hours the whole edition of 300 had been disposed of at 50¢ each. The paper is devoted to the interests of the Idaho Ladies' Mite Association and will be issued weekly until and during the Ladies Fair, commencing Wednesday, the 17th."[15]

The Idaho Statesman reports that "The fair given by the Ladies Mite Society for the purpose of liquidating the debt of the Baptist Church in this city (Idaho City) was a grand affair.....I am told the net proceeds amounted to the sum of $700."[16]

Two weeks later this same paper reports the organization of the Baptist Church at Idaho City "on the 31, ult. The Rev. Hamilton, pastor. Mr. Hamilton proposes to organize a church in this city shortly."[17]

The organization of the church is mentioned several times in the proceedings of the San Francisco Baptist Association for 1864. From the digest of the letter of the Stockton church to the association we quote:

> "Under the direction of the Home Mission Board we have sent Hiram Hamilton to Idaho where he has baptized, and secured a church edifice."[18]

At this meeting of the San Francisco Baptist Association the Idaho City church made application for membership in the association. The Report of the Committee on Applications of New Churches for Membership in the association reads:

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

> "Report that we have received application from a church in Idaho Ty., organized by Rev. Hiram Hamilton, whose designation to that field has been referred to in the letter from Stockton. Resolved, that the church in Idaho City, Idaho Ty., be received as a member of this body; that in the absence of a delegation from Idaho City, Rev. Dr. Hendrickson be appointed to receive the hand of fellowship in behalf of the church."[19]

The digest of the letter from the Baptist Church at Idaho City to this association for 1864 reads as follows:

> "We are alone in a great wilderness and are surrounded by enemies. An infant church, we ask admission into the Association. We meet in a large and good house, partly paid for, and have an encouraging Sunday School. Our pastor, Rev. Hiram Hamilton, labors also at Boise City, 30 mi. distant, where he has a flourishing Sunday School. We have received by experience a Nestorian from Palestine, whose people being Baptists retained much of the true faith during the Dark Ages. He is a native of Bethlehem, a resident of Galilee, and himself a Baptist, was immersed in the River Jordan. An immediate supply of S.S. books is greatly needed. Present number, eight."[20]

Thus we see what surprising results Hamilton had produced in the short time he had been in Idaho Territory. Not only had he purchased a church building and assisted in raising over $1200 to pay off its debt, but he had also organized a Baptist Church, had kept up the Sunday School Kingsley started, had started one at Buena Vista, and had started work at Boise City in the form of a Sunday School. Truly this is an imposing list of accomplishments for one so recently arrived!

But let us back track again in order to pick up the threads of his work at Boise City. We cannot be sure of the date of Hamilton's first visit to Boise City, although the chances are that he passed through the place on his way to

21. As quoted from Goulder, p. 374, by Spriggs, ibid., p. 26.

22. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 1, Number 9 (August 13, 1864), p. 2.

23. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 1, Number 15 (August 27, 1864) p. 1.

24. Ibid., Volume 1, Number 21 (September 10, 1864) p. 2.

Idaho City since he came from California over the Miner's Trail. The town was even younger than Idaho City, having been populated out of the backwash, so to speak, from the gold rush to the Boise Basin. In 1864 when Hamilton visited it first it could not have been much more than a year old, if that. It was described thus at about that time:

> "The U. S. Marshall brought the Archives to Boise City, a little sage-brush town, situated on a diminuative, meandering mountain stream, scarcely navigable for ducks at the season of highest water."[21]

In July, 1864, the Statesman began publication as a tri-weekly at $20 a year, and from it we gain a sketchy but interesting account of the religious developments in the city.

Rev. Mr. Fackler of the Episcopal Church who was on a tour of inspection through Boise, Owyhee, and Alturas counties looking over the religious prospects for his denomination was the first man of whom we have any record to hold religious services in Boise City, preaching for the first time on August 14, 1864.[22] However, Fackler seems to have been more or less feeling out the people of Boise, and was not prepared apparently to launch into an immediate work there. But not so as far as the representative of the Home Mission Society was concerned, for beginning August 28, 1864, he began a regular work in Boise,[23] alternating between Boise and Idaho City as his announcements published in the Statesman indicate. Two weeks after his first service in the school-house at Boise he organized a Sunday School,[24] furnishing it with materials left over from the

25. Ibid., Volume 1, Number 27 (September 17, 1864) p. 2.

26. Ibid., Volume 1, Number 46 (November 8, 1864) p. 2.

27. Ibid., Volume 1, Number 45 (November 5, 1864) p. 3.

Sunday School at Idaho City. The Sundays that Hamilton was not in Boise, Fackler preached, and when our missionary was in town, Fackler gave way to him,[25] so apparently Fackler recognized that Hamilton had a priority in the field, even though he, Fackler, had preached the first sermon in Boise. Hamilton apparently spent the first two weeks of his schedule working in Boise, and the last two weeks in Idaho City, carrying on this arrangement during the months of September and October.

Not only was Hamilton working like one of his bees for the Home Mission Society, but he also found time to take an active part in civic affairs. Among other things, he was the regular agent in the territory for the United States Sanitary Commission, the forerunner of the Red Cross in this country. As a part of his work for the commission he organized a Soldier's Relief Society in Idaho City on October 24, 1864, and in Boise City on November 5, 1864.[26] Hamilton was Vice-President of the former and Fackler President of the latter.

The trip to Boise in the early part of November was Hamilton's last visit to the city that year. He held services in the school-house Sunday evening, November 6, and having organized the Relief Society on November 8, he returned to Idaho City on the 9th.[27]

The Idaho World, successor to The Boise News in Idaho City on November 12 announces that services will be held at the "Baptist Church by Rev. Hamilton at 10:30 tomorrow

28. The Idaho World (November 12, 1864) as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 31.

29. The Idaho World (November 19, 1864) as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 31.

30. Minutes, American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1865, as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 31.

(Nov. 13th). As Mr. Hamilton leaves on Tuesday for California to bring out his family, this will be his last sermon here until next Spring."[28] The November 19 issue informs us that Hamilton is gone, and states: "he expects to return in the Spring with his family. He informs us that he intends to bring with him a melodian and a bell for the church." We read also that "Rev. Kingsley will hold divine service in his church on Sunday morning."[29]

Thus Hamilton's first period of service in Idaho for the American Baptist Home Mission Society was for just six months. His report to the Board as published in the proceedings for 1865 is brief, but to the point:

> "Weeks of labor ---- 26; stations supplied ---- 2; Organized a church of six members and purchased a church edifice and parsonage."[30]

The Board certainly got their money's worth from this man, especially considering that they expected him to raise almost two-thirds of his salary on the field.

But he was to return in the Spring, so we must take a hurried glance at what happened on the two fields while he was gone. At Idaho City things went from bad to worse. In the first place Kingsley proved to be too loyal to the Methodists to make a good supply pastor for the Baptist Church there, and in a short time the building changed from Baptist through Protestant to Methodist in its designation in the announcements published in <u>The Idaho World.</u> A Rev. C. H. E. Newton, presiding elder of the Methodist Episcopal

31. The Pacific Advocate (March 25, 1865) as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 33.

32. The Idaho World (May 20, 1865) as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 33.

Church South, arrived in Idaho City toward the close of the year, held a watch-night service in the church, and preached each Sunday evening for awhile after New Years. Early in the year, however, Kingsley left for Portland, and what happened while he was gone we are unable to say. The Pacific Advocate for March 25, 1865, published this momento of Kingsley's trip:

> "Rev. C. S. Kingsley, of Idaho City, called Wednesday last.....He thinks there is a prosperous future for the people of that Ty. Idaho City, including the contiguous settlers, numbering 5,000 souls, Idaho City proper 3000.....Methodistically speaking, he says, they are out of the world, as they are not within the limits of any Conference or mission established by the Board. Will the authorities East make note of this."[31]

Then the blow struck--Idaho City was destroyed by fire. The Idaho World for May 20, 1865, gives the following account:

> "Idaho City in ashes.....Nearly the entire town in ashes...The entire business portion.....was completely destroyed.....Fire broke out of a roof of a dance hall on Montgomery Street. Every building on Commercial Street as far East as the church was burned... The Methodist Church was badly injured, windows destroyed and sides broken down, but was not destroyed."[32]

By June 10 the town was rapidly rebuilding, but many had left and the fire proved to spell disaster for the church.

However, in the other half of Hamilton's field, things ran along a little better. Fackler looked after the religious state of affairs during the winter, holding forth in the new school house. The territorial legislature moved the capital from Lewiston to Boise on the day before Christ-

33. The Idaho World (June 24, 1865) as quoted by Spriggs, Ibid., p. 35.

34. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 1, Number 147 (July 1, 1865) p. 2.

35. Ibid., Volume 1, Number 149 (July 6, 1865) p. 2.

mas, 1865, and created a new county, Ada, with Boise as county seat, which of course enhanced the importance of the town. Then many of the refugees of the Idaho City fire settled there, so that on Hamilton's return Boise City had become the spot in Idaho.

Leaving his family in Boise on his return to Idaho in June, 1865, Hamilton went up to Idaho City to see what could be done about his work there. The Idaho World reported his arrival as follows:

> "Rev. Hamilton of the Baptist church of this place returned yesterday from his visit to California. He came by the Honey Lake road bringing all his household gods (goods?) with him including 12 swarms of bees which are now in good condition at Boise City."[33]

He found the church converted into a court house and dance hall, and the press making wise-cracks about its present state of affairs. The situation apparently was hopeless, for he returned to Boise City by Friday, June 30, 1865, in time to get a church announcement in the Statesman for July 1 as follows:

> "Rev. H. Hamilton will preach at the public school house...tomorrow at 11 o'clock a.m."[34]

And, as he did the year previous, he lost no time in getting down to work in Boise, taking part in the Fourth of July celebration, and taking charge of the Sunday School which he had organized, but which during his absence had become known as "Rev. Fackler's S.S."[35] He was even nominated by the Ada County Union Convention for the office of Superintendent

36. Ibid., Volume 1, Number 155 (July 20, 1865) p. 2.

37. Ibid., Volume 2, Number 13 (August 24, 1865) p. 2.

38. Minutes, American Baptist Home Mission Society (September 7, 1865) as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit, p. 37.

39. The Idaho World (September 9, 1865) as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., p. 37.

of Public School on July 20th.[36] However, the Union Ticket was swamped by the Democrats and Hamilton lost, 322 to 509.

In August we note that Hamilton brought the editor of the Statesman "four or five pounds of honey.....from one of his hives about three miles below town.....His bees have increased to the original 20 swarms and are of the Italian variety."[37]

After Hamilton had been at work four months, the Home Mission Board got around to reappointing him to the field as this record shows:

> "Sept. 7, 1865: Hiram Hamilton to Idaho Ty., 12 months from May 1, 1865, Salary same as last year, viz., $700....People to add $1100."[38]

So again, Hamilton had to make his way as he went, if he were to live!

The situation in Idaho City had gone from bad to worse with The Idaho World commenting September 9, 1865, as follows:

> "NO CHURCHES--The church going community, if any there be, are badly off at present in this place. With the exception of the Catholic churches at several points in this county, there is no church of any denomination open for religious services. The building originally erected for that purpose in Idaho City still stands, being occupied as a court room; but no minister of the gospel had proclaimed 'glad' or any other kind of tidings from its pulpit for several months. There is no Protestant church in Boise Basin."[39]

This article led the editor of the Statesman to comment as follows on the situation:

> "That most erratic of all places the wide world over, Idaho City, has plenty of churches, but no preachers....Boise City presents her case a little differently. We have good ministers and services every

40. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 2, Number 27 (September 26, 1865) p. 2.

41. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 2, Number 27 (September 26, 1865) p. 2.

> Sunday, but no churches. The Rev. Mr. Hamilton has for some time had the matter in contemplation of building a church this summer or fall, and has taken the preliminary steps to do so. Having first secured the necessary site for this purpose, he began yesterday (Sept. 25) to try the temper of the people in the matter of contributing toward the necessary funds for the erection of a suitable house. He met with unexpected success, obtaining in the course of an hour or two, nearly a thousand dollar subscription to this commendable undertaking. It is not proposed to build an expensive or imposing structure....but only a plain substantual building. Yet at the same time, neat and commodious for present purposes. The cost, we believe, is estimated at not over $3,000, which sum can certainly be raised without difficulty.....Around the church and school house gather associations and recollections most dear to every heart. It is high time that a respectable specimen of both institutions were planted in Boise City." [40]

To this fine statement by the editor, Hamilton adds a word of his own in the form of an open letter to the citizens of Boise:

> "Boise City, Idaho Ty.
> Sept. 25, 1865
>
> "A good house of worship is much needed in this city. For more than a year past worship has been maintained in places inconvenient and uncomfortable. The prosperity of this city and valley demands the erection at once of a good church. This fact needs only to be stated to be seen and appreciated by all who have at heart the best interests of society and the welfare of the country. The undersigned is authorized as a missionary of the A.B.H.M.S. to execute such work. The work is begun. Three goodly lots, in a body, on Idaho Street, have been presented and deeded by Mr. S. A. Adams for the purpose, and a subscription of over $700 has already been secured. Mr. Robb had drawn a plan, which, if executed, will be an ornament to the city. An opportunity at once will be given to all who feel favorable to the enterprise to aid in the work. ---by Hiram Hamilton, pastor"[41]

And so three months after his return to Idaho, Hamilton had launched a full scale building program, having first very

42. Ibid., Volume 2, Number 143 (June 23, 1866) p. 2.

43. Minutes, San Francisco Association, October 13-17, 1866.

carefully laid the groundwork. But it was an uphill struggle, and although Hamilton started his program first, the Episcopalians got under way faster, and were able to dedicate their church first, though they did not let the contract for the building until nearly a year after Hamilton made his first announcement concerning building a church.[42]

In the fall of 1866 Hamilton reported his work to the San Francisco Association in a letter, a digest of which follows:

> "Boise City, Idaho Ty. No church organization yet. Brother Hamilton writes of much labor; hard, but important field. During the past year has had only one Baptist sister to cooperate with him. Preaches to the Indians whenever he can get an interpreter. Is much interested in that people. Christians of other denominations have nobly cooperated. Preach over an area of 200 miles, and many hearers come from far. Have applied to the Home Mission Society for assistance. Is building a house of worship and proceeds only so fast as funds are raised. The building 24x40 and to cost $3000. At present occupy the Court House and have good congregations. Sustain a S.S. The Episcopalian minister is about to leave and the field will be unoccupied save for Brother Hamilton. Ask the influence of the Association with the Home Mission Society to secure assistance without which he cannot remain."[43]

There are several items in this digest of Hamilton's letter to the association which are deserving of comment. First of all, we note his mention of the fact that "during the past year he has had only one Baptist sister to cooperate with him." While no names are mentioned, from other sources we gather that this good woman was Mrs. M. L. Kelley, the woman who headed The Ladies' Mite Society in Idaho City, who moved from Idaho City to Boise on the death of her husband. She later remarried and as Mrs. M. L. Wilson was the

44. Book of Clippings, p. 98.

45. Baptist History of South Idaho, Anonymous Mss, p. 33.

only surviving charter member of the Baptist Church in Boise in the late '90's according to an item in the big book of clippings at Baptist State Headquarters.[44] Familiarly referred to as "Aunty Wilson" in later years, she long took an active part in church work wherever she found herself. A brief sketch of her life handed down to us in a history of Baptist work in South Idaho written by an unknown person is worth preserving here for the records:

> "Mrs. M. L. Kelley, afterwards Mrs. Wilson, is a sister of Deacon Claiborne Hill, of Brownsville, Oregon. She crossed 'The Plains' in 1850, and in 1851 settled in Yreka, Cal., where her effects were burnt. Here she was presented with a $100 bracelet in token of the appreciation of the community for her manifestations of Christian character in her ministrations to the sick. She had an only son killed in the Rogue River War. She came from Yreka to Florence, Idaho and in 1863 to Idaho City. Here she was president of The Ladies' Mite Society and greatly aided Rev. Hiram Hamilton in his labors at this place in 1864. She, with other sisters, built the first Baptist meeting house in Idaho, worth some $2000, or more. But many of the Baptists having moved away, the building was sold to Boise County for a Courthouse. Sister Kelley's husband died here, and she moved to Boise City, married Mr. William Wilson, and is the treasurer, and one of the most active and earnest members of the Boise City Baptist Church."[45]

In the next place, we ought to notice that Hamilton mentions his work with the Indians and the fact that he is "much interested in that people." Cathcart's Baptist Encyclopedia Vol. 1., in the article on Hiram Hamilton mentions his work with the Indians, saying: "He collected the Benneau (Bannock) and Shoshone Indians and preached the Gospel to them." This probably accounts for his statement that he was preaching "over an area of 200 miles", for in

46. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 2, Number 47 (November 11, 1885) p. 2.

all likelihood, he had to go and find the Indians if he was to preach to them.

Next we should notice that at the time of his report to the association he was occupying the Court House and had good congregations. If we go back to the first announcements made in the Statesman we notice that Hamilton started preaching in the school house, and if we follow the announcements through week by week we notice that he continued to do so for four and one-half months, until November 11, 1865, when the regular Sunday announcement is changed to read: "Hamilton will preach at the court house tomorrow",[46] et cetera. Spriggs says that Hamilton continued to preach in the Court House until the church was finished.

Finally, we should notice that Hamilton is almost piteous in his plea that his home association intervene on his behalf with the Home Mission Society to give him more adequate support "without which he cannot remain." As we shall see him, Hamilton struggled along for another year, trying to make both ends meet, and just when he had the work well under way was forced to leave because he could not support his family alone, and the Home Mission Society withdrew its support. This despite the fact that he was beloved at Boise as the following item in the Statesman testifies:

> "SURPRISE--The Rev. Mr. Hamilton and family were the objects of an agreeable surprise party last Wednesday evening by a number of ladies and gentlemen who most uncerimoniously assembled at his residence.....Before leaving they presented him with a purse containing about a hundred and fifty dollars as a slight token of their regard.

47. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 2, Number 77 (August 20, 1866), p. 3.

48. Ibid., Volume 3, Number 26 (September 22, 1866) p. 1.

> Mr. Hamilton is abundantly worthy of the assistance of the citizens of this place for his persevering effort in maintaining regular service on the Sabbath since his arrival among us....."47

Certainly experiences such as these ought to make our people pause and ponder before they decrease their giving to missions and thus force their mission boards to enter into a policy of retrenchment!

The Episcopalians used their church for public worship for the first time on September 2, 1866, although there were still a few things needing to be done to complete the building. Before the next Sunday Rev. St. Michael Fackler was on his way home to rejoin his family. Word came on February 19, 1867, that he had died enroute via Panama. The present St. Michael's Cathedral in Boise is named after this man who cooperated so magnificently with Hamilton.

But even though the Episcopalians beat the Baptists to the finish line in the race to complete their church, the Baptists did not lose heart. The Statesman for September 22, 1866, reports:

> "The new Baptist church at the corner of Ninth and Idaho Streets is being rapidly built. The body of the building is up and will soon be enclosed. Although not a very large or ostentious structure, it is neatly and tastefully designed and when completed will be an ornament to the place.....We are assured by Rev. Hamilton, the pastor, that this church is not too holy a place for other denominations to hold service in, when it is not in use by his own congregation."48

Meanwhile, Hamilton's personal financial affairs seem to have been rapidly deteriorating. The Board had not yet reappointed him to the field so he was laboring on his own. In order to make a living he was forced to open a private

49. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 3, Number 54 (January 5, 1867) p. 1.

50. Minutes, American Baptist Home Mission Society (December 13,1866) as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 48.

51. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 3, Number 67 (December 25, 1866) p. 2.

school. The Statesman for November 27, 1866, carries this item:

> "PRIVATE SCHOOL--Rev. Hamilton opened a private school yesterday at his residence near the corner of Main and Tenth Streets. It is understood that there is no public fund for the support of a district school.....Mr. Hamilton's experience in teaching is a sufficient guarantee that he will give good satisfaction."[49]

L. W. Gowen's history, as quoted by Spriggs comments on the school thus: "His wife taught a private school which was located on the S. E. corner of Main and Tenth Streets." Probably Gowen is confused here, or perhaps both Hamilton and his wife taught in this school.

Finally, on December 13, 1866, the Home Mission Board got around to reappointing Hamilton to the field on which he had been laboring so faithfully without compensation. The record of this transaction is as follows:

> "December 13, 1866: Hiram Hamilton as General Missionary to Idaho for 12 months from May 1, 1866 at a salary of $700. Provided the people among whom he labors shall provide the balance necessary for his support, such amount not to exceed eleven hundred dollars to be credited to the Board."[50]

We wonder if the San Francisco Association did apply pressure and if this is the reason he was reappointed at all!

Meanwhile, Hamilton had been elected as Chaplain of the fourth session of the Idaho Legislature on December 11, 1866. Since his own church was not yet finished, the "House adjourned at an early hour yesterday to give the use of the Hall to the Baptist Sunday School"[51] for their Christmas program and tree. This again speaks well for Hamilton's personality--he even persuaded the legislature to move out

52. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 3, Number 72 (January 5, 1867) p. 2.

53. Anonymous, Baptist History of South Idaho, p. 2.

for a Christmas program!

Hamilton's last announcement of services in the Court House appears in the Statesman for December 29, 1866. On January 5th, 1867, the Statesman announced the first services held in the new church building, as follows:

> "Rev. Hamilton will hold service at the Baptist church tomorrow (January 6) at 10½ A.M. S.S. at 2 P.M."[52]

An anonymous collection of historical data on Baptist work in Idaho has a write-up by D. J. Pierce on the "First Baptist Church of Boise City." He has the following comments to make about the building of the church:

> "During the summer of 1866 Rev. Hiram Hamilton began the enterprise of building the first house of worship ever erected in Boise City. The Property was secured in the name of 'The Baptist Church of Boise City', and after much labor by earnest workers the present house of worship was erected, but left unfinished, both inside and outside."[53]

The Manual of the Boise Church tells us the building cost $2500. While we would like to be able to claim with Pierce for the glory of Baptists that ours was the first church erected at Boise, we have already seen how the Episcopalians although starting after us, managed to finish their church before ours. Actually, we have to concede that the New Year's Sunday service held by Hamilton in the new Baptist church came some four months after the first service held in the Episcopal building.

The year 1867 saw the close of Hamilton's work in Idaho. The bitter truth seems to be, that despite the fine work he had done, the Mission Board for some reason withdrew its support--at least it did not reappoint him when his

54. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 3, Number 115 (April 16, 1867) p. 2.

55. Ibid., Volume 3, Number 98 (March 7, 1867) p. 2.

term expired on April 30, 1867. Hamilton was not one to give up, though, and apparently foreseeing the Board's refusal to continue his support, he launched out on a bigger teaching enterprise than the one announced November 27, 1866, in the Statesman. The April 16, 1867 issue of the Statesman carried both an advertisement and story on the "Boise Valley Seminary."

> "Mr. Hamilton opened yesterday his Academy in the Baptist Church building. The rooms, though not yet quite finished are commodious and comfortable, far more so than any other school room in the Territory. Besides being an experienced teacher himself, Mr. Hamilton has associated with him the best assistants. It is his purpose to establish a school of acknowledged merit and to improve his facilities for supplying the educational demands of Boise Valley as his patronage shall warrant. The enterprise demands to succeed and should be patronized....."[54]

The advertisement lists the faculty of the seminary as follows: "Rev. H. Hamilton A.B., Principal; Mrs. M. J. Hamilton, Associate-Principal; Miss Abbie Cline, Teacher Instrumental Music; Prof. A. B. Morse, Teacher Vocal Music; Mrs. F. B. Smith, teacher, Penmanship." This advertisement appeared in the paper for a month or so, but no news item concerning the seminary is to be found, and we do not know whether the announced twelve week term was finished or not.

Apparently the seminary was not much of a financial success though, because Pierce tells us that Hamilton decided to leave Boise in the "summer of 1867." Abandoned as he was by the mission society, the presence of a baby daughter born on March 4, 1867[55] making another mouth to feed undoubtedly influenced his decision to leave the place where he had labored so hard in order that he might obtain a living for his family. Spriggs quotes Rev. B. F. Morrow as

56. Spriggs, op. cit., p. 52.

57. Anonymous Mss op. cit., p. 2.

58. The Pacific Baptist, Volume 17, Number 5 (February 2, 1893) p. 5.

saying:

> "I saw Hamilton when he was leaving for California. I was living at Morgan's and Fruit's Ferry on the road from Boise to Silver City, keeping the house at the ferry. He stayed over night there with me. He was in the bee business. I didn't get to talk much with him."[56]

We can gather how straightened Hamilton's finances were from the fact that Pierce states that Hamilton had to request that the money he had invested in the church building be replaced, and he appealed to the society for a loan to the church of $475 which was secured by the aid of J. Brumbach, Esq.[57]

It is difficult to ascertain just what sort of arrangements Hamilton made for the care of the property which he had secured during his stay in Boise. One statement is made that he passed "the house over to the Mission Society who refunded to him the $400 which he had personally invested". Professor A. M. Brumbach in a sketch read at the dedication of the present Boise First Baptist Church building said:

> "The Baptist house which stood so long on the corner of Ninth and Idaho was built in 1866 under the supervision of Rev. Hiram Hamilton, largely by his financial resources, and the title vested in a Baptist church yet to be organized. Later it became the property of the American Baptist Home Mission Society..."[58]

Hamilton thus served in Idaho for a total period of two years and six months. During this time he organized a Baptist church in Idaho City, securing Kingsley's church and a parsonage, only to see his work undermined by a fire

59. Baptist Encyclopedia, Edited by Wm. Cathcart, D.D., Louis H. Everts Co., Philadelphia, 1881, Volume 1, p. 492.

60. Pacific Baptist, Volume 18, Number 19 (May 10, 1894)

which practically wiped out the town. He also organized a Sunday School at Boise, and built a church and secured a parsonage there. Besides this he was the town school teacher, official representative of the Sanitary Commission, and chaplain of the legislature. Surely no one could complain that he had not justified his presence in Idaho, yet the Board did not continue his appointment. We cannot help but wonder why, even though to wonder is to raise questions which probably can never be answered because of the passing of time. We are thankful though that the work which he started at Boise still stands as a monument to his pioneer spirit and perseverance despite terrific odds against him!

After leaving Idaho, Hamilton served long and faithfully in California as a pastor. The Baptist Encyclopedia has an article written on Hamilton which has this to say about his days of service after leaving Idaho:

> "In 1869 he returned to California, located in the San Joaquin Valley, began missionary work, established a church, into whose membership over fifty were soon baptized. His life work is that of an educator. In this he is still active; is a member of the San Joaquin Board of Education, a zealous Christian, and ever ready to aid in advancing the interests of the Denomination in California."[59]

Spriggs says that later Hamilton moved to Orange, California, and continued to be active in the denomination. As late as 1894 his name is carried in the records of the Southern California Baptist Convention as the official auditor of the convention.[60] He was then 74 years old--yet still interested in the Master's work. Thus he served to a ripe

old age and quietly laid down his work:

"We weep as one by one we lay
Our brethren with the garnered host,
While gratefully the ages say
Heroic lives are never lost."

CHAPTER II

A FAITHFUL HUSBANDMAN

B. F. Morrow

The Baptist minister who came to Boise Valley to seek his fortune was an entirely different type of man from his fellow worker, the American Baptist Home Missionary. We have already seen that Hiram Hamilton was a well educated person, being a college graduate and a man of culture. His contemporary minister in Southwestern Idaho was a much different type, conforming more to the pioneer pattern as we usually think of it. Named after America's pioneer in the scientific world, Benjamin Franklin Morrow represented that better type of pioneer that so often found itself outnumbered in the days of the early west by gold-seekers, drifters, adventurers and outlaws.

Morrow was born in Osage County, Missouri, March 31, 1826. His education was scant, and what he had he obtained by walking four miles to the district school in the winter. This lack of education was later to prove a real handicap in his efforts to serve effectively his Lord and Master. Indeed, ten years after Morrow landed in Idaho one of his fellow ministers wrote back east and offered the following opinion concerning him:

> "In looking over this I see that there is no mention made of the labors of another minister who lives in this Territory. He is

1. Book of Clippings, p. 3.

2. Spriggs, W. T. S., A History of Baptists in Southern Idaho, Mss. p. 55.

> a good old man; I love him as a Christian brother, but he cannot preach, except in a few outside neighborhoods. He is a farmer and spends nearly all his time at farm work."[1]

But lacking though he was in training, Morrow more than made up for this handicap by his indefatigable zeal and long term devotion to the cause that he sought to serve. It is undoubtedly safe to say that handicapped as he was, he nevertheless contributed more by several times than did his critic toward establishing Baptist work in Idaho on a sound footing.

While still living in Missouri he was converted and joined the Good Hope Baptist Church in Adair County, sometime in 1855. A year later the pastor of the church died, and Morrow, then thirty years old was put forward by his own and neighboring churches to be their preacher. Spriggs says that he was licensed to the Gospel Ministry "by order of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Adair County, Missouri, at their regular meeting on the fourth Saturday of April, 1857. Signed, G. C. Gibson--Moderator; G. W. Smith, Clerk."[2]

Three years later he was ordained in the same county by the Fairview church, the Ordination Council meeting and approving his ordination on March 25, 1860. He continued to preach in various parts of Missouri and Iowa until 1863 when he decided to move west in order to escape the spreading torture of the war between states, which at that time was causing much unrest in his part of the country. A write-up on Morrow which appeared in the March 27, 1926, Statesman

3. From Newspaper Clipping preserved at Baptist State Headquarters.

4. Spriggs, op. cit., quoting a Mr. Keller, p. 57.

5. B. F. Morrow as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 58.

on the occasion of his one hundredth birthday reports an interview with him in which he reviewed the overland journey he had made sixty years previous to Idaho.

> "it was on August 27, 1863, that he joined a wagon train back in Monroe County, Iowa, and heading the pioneer train as its captain and leader, followed the Old Oregon Trail west to the Boise Valley where lack of funds compelled him to abandon the train when it reached this valley April 19, 1864."[3]

L. W. Gowen's collection states that he had intended to go through to Walla Walla; but when he arrived in the Boise Valley his teams had given out, and he was without provisions and money and therefore stopped and settled not far from where Caldwell now is. "The times looked very dark to him" but he set to work and soon had a shanty put up in which he managed to get along for a time.

He had settled in that part of the valley which is still known as Dixie, "one mile south of the Dixie school house down the road that runs South from the Greenleaf road and near the bench."[4] The work of getting a roof over his family apparently occupied his time for the remainder of the summer and the fall, but by October word had gotten around that he was a preacher and he was called upon to preside at a marriage ceremony. Concerning this event Morrow later said:

> "I married the first couple in Idaho, Oct. 19, 1864 in Dixie Flat. I had to tramp down the grass so that I could find them."[5]

He preached his first sermon December 19, 1864, "in a dance hall on a dirt floor," and the same day organized the first

6. B. F. Morrow as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 58.

Baptist Sunday School in Idaho. (It was not the first Sunday School, as some writers have claimed, for we have seen that Kingsley had already organized a Sunday School about eight months' previous at Idaho City.) Some of those present told Morrow that it was the first sermon they had heard for several years.

Morrow found the dances and whiskey a serious hindrance to his work and became very discouraged, although he usually had good congregations and the best of attention. Of this period Morrow once said: "I was pretty lonely. It was four years before I ever heard anybody pray besides myself."[6] In fact, he became so discouraged that seven months later in June, 1865, he decided it was unwise to try to continue the work, so many of the interested persons having moved away, and so he packed up and moved with his family to Walla Walla.

We do not know for sure when he returned to the Boise Valley. Spriggs thinks it might have been in 1867. At least we know that he was living in the valley in 1867 for he saw Hamilton at the ferry house, when Hamilton was leaving with his family for California. He returned to Dixie Flat in 1868 and began to preach in the Dixie School House, which had been built by this time, since the valley was by then pretty well settled up. For three years he preached twice every Sunday here, but he did not confine his work to the Dixie community alone. Dr. Dwight Spencer writing later about the work of this good man said:

7. The Baptist Examiner (October 20, 1887) article preserved in Book of Clippings, pp. 135-139.

8. Gowen, L. W., Baptists in South Idaho, 1864-1904, as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 60.

9. Ibid., p. 61.

> "Mr. Morrow at once began to preach in school houses and private dwellings, riding on horseback 30-50 miles to perform these services. He was one of those Pioneer preachers who were not satisfied unless they could include in their field all that joined them."[7]

Gowen says that "he soon extended his work to other points in the Boise Valley, especially at a school known as the Marble Front (about four miles east of Caldwell, this side of Middleton on the southside of the river). He also went up the river and preached at the Pomeroy School House situated on the South side of the river nearly opposite Star, and occasionally at other places."[8]

It was at the Dixie School House that he organized his first church in Idaho, The Dixie Baptist Church. There seems to be a difference of opinion as to exactly when this took place. Rev. L. W. Gowen, who knew Morrow personally for many years, and who was on the field about fifteen years after the event took place says:

> "In September 1868 he got the Baptists living in this part of the valley together and organized the First Baptist Church in Idaho. The church took the name of the Dixie Baptist Church. There were seven constituent members: Rev. B. F. Morrow and wife, Reuben Cox and wife, Alfred Powers and wife, and Thomas Woods. Brother Cox had been ordained a Deacon in the East. He came to Idaho in 1864. ....Michael Potts and wife united with the church by baptism in 1870 and became active members. They came to Idaho in 1863."[9]

A Rev. Mr. Willey is quoted by Spriggs as backing up Gowen with the statement: "In 1868 the first Baptist church of Dixie was organized by Brother Morrow with only seven charter members."

10. Anonymous, Baptist History of South Idaho, p. 7.

11. Gowen, L. W., Baptists in South Idaho 1864-1904, as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 62.

12. B. F. Morrow, as quoted by Spriggs, ibid., . 62.

As over against these statements we find two other sources giving October, 1869, as the date of the organization and mentioning six persons as composing the charter member list. One authority compiling a brief history of the then organized churches in Idaho states definitely that the church was organized October 30, 1869.[10] The author is inclined to agree with this latter person, since it seems doubtful if Morrow could have organized a church as soon as September, 1868, after having just returned from Walla Walla, at the most a year previous, and having just moved from the ferry house to Dixie Flat sometime in 1868.

Mr. Gowen says: "The Dixie church continued to increase in membership quite rapidly for two or three years when dissentions arose and the church declined and eventually became extinct."[11] Another writer blames the dissentions on Methodist or Campbellite preachers, who, he says, were on the field before Morrow, and would come and sow discord among his members while he was away. Morrow himself is quoted by Spriggs as saying: "The Baptist Church in Dixie got into trouble. And they got me into it. I withdrew the hand of fellowship from them. Then they turned me out.....I went to Wingville which was 9 miles west of Baker City, and they received me into the church. Rev. J. B. Foster and Rev. L. C. Booth were pastors there."[12] One authority declares that the "dispute ran on for months, but was finally settled by a Council from Oregon which brought about a reconciliation, and Brother Morrow continued to preach for the church as before"

13. Minutes, Mt. Pleasant Association, 1872, p. 4.

14. Ibid., p. 6.

Morrow's contact with the Wingville church was not wasted, however, for it served to associate him with the Mt. Pleasant Association of Western Oregon, of which the Wingville church was a member. The fifth session of the Mt. Pleasant Association met with the Mt. Pleasant (Weston) church in June, 1872. The minutes show that Morrow was in attendance.[13] It was at this session that the Association "voted to include Ada and adjacent counties in Idaho Ty. in the bounds of the Mt. Pleasant Association."[14] In all probability this step was taken at the request of Morrow who was present as a delegate from Wingville. Although still estranged from the Dixie church, his heart was with them, and possibly he even had this step taken so that the Association would have jurisdiction to come over into Idaho and settle the dispute between him and the church he had founded, which it later did. After reconciliation with its pastor the church was admitted to the Mt. Pleasant Association in 1874, but owing to the long distances involved was never afterwards represented. Indeed, shortly afterwards the records of this church end, and it became extinct. Two years later the New Hope Church was organized in the same vicinity by Morrow. As far as we can discover, the only member of the Dixie Church who was a charter member of the New Hope Church was Mrs. Michael Pott.

But to tell the story of the New Hope church at this point in the narrative would be to get ahead of our story. At the meeting of the Mt. Pleasant Association referred to

15. Spriggs, op. cit., p. 66.

above, which voted to include "Ada and adjacent counties in Idaho Ty." within its bounds, Morrow was delegated to act as the Association missionary to that part of the country. Thus, even though the national society had temporarily lost interest in Idaho, within a short time another responsible body of Baptists took over officially. And Morrow seems to have taken his appointment seriously, for within six or seven months of the Association action, he had organized another church in Idaho--this time at Bluff Station. Spriggs describes the location of this Stagecoach stop, which was also a ferry crossing, as being eight or ten miles east, up the river, from the present town of Payette. He quotes Morrow himself as saying that it was on the South side of the river, opposite the high bluff on the North Bank. On July 28, 1923, Spriggs was on the spot himself and found the Bluff Station House 150 yards west of the bridge crossing the river at that point. The Bluff Station school house where this church was organized no longer stands. Mrs. Mary Wilson, daughter of Uncle Sammy Applegate, one of the charter members of the Bluff Station church, was along with Spriggs on this trip, and pointed out the site to him, about two miles further east "almost opposite the mouth of Big Willow Creek."[15]

The Bluff Station church was born out of a revival which B. F. Morrow began about Christmas, 1872. The Statesman for January 9, 1873, reports on the revival as follows:

> "We are informed that a great revival meeting is being held at Bluff Station School house, on the Payette. And that over 30 per-

16. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 9, Number 76 (January 9, 1873) p. 2.

17. Spriggs, op. cit., p. 64.

18. Gowen, op. cit., as quoted by Spriggs, Ibid., p. 64.

> sons have experienced religion. Elder Morrow who lives below Middleton, on the Boise River commenced the meeting about two weeks ago and was very successful in drawing a large congregation to hear him preach. He continued his meetings for two weeks night and day, and his efforts to awaken religious feeling have been crowned with remarkable success. Elder Allender has assisted the past week. Rev. Gwinn of this city has taken the place of Elder Morrow. He has commenced another protracted meeting at Middleton."[16]

Thus we know definitely the when and how of the revival. But it is not so easy to be so definite concerning the organization of the church because of conflicting statements and claims which have been made regarding it. Spriggs quotes a Mr. Willey as saying, "By invitation,he (Morrow) conducted a series of meetings at Bluff Station...This resulted in the organization of the Bluff Station Baptist Church, March, 1873."[17] L. W. Gowen is quoted as saying: "Elder Morrow....held meetings at....Bluff Station in a school house known as the Applegate School house, about 10 miles above the present town of Payette....and in the Spring of 1873 the Bluff Station Church was organized with 22 members. Among these was Brother S. W. Applegate who soon began to preach the Gospel and was ordained."[18]

These two quotations are not the ones that cause us the difficulty, however. More trouble lies in a letter written by Rev. J. B. Foster to Dr. E. E. L. Taylor and preserved for us in the book of clippings at Baptist State headquarters. Although it is long, it contains so much information of interest, that it is quoted in full:

"Bluff Station, Ada Co.
February 19, 1874

My Dear Brother Taylor:

Yours of the 9th inst. was received last evening. Thanks for the kind and encouraging words it contains. It is like finding an oasis in a desert to receive a kind encouraging letter from a Christian brother. Oh that all of our brethren in the east could appreciate the condition of the people in the newly-settled portions of our great country! There would be more self-sacrificing men out here at work.

You ask me if I am traveling at my own expense. On that point I will explain by giving you a sketch of my history for the last year. I came from Oregon to this place (Bluff Station) on business one year ago. Found a people without any preaching but anxious to hear. After attending to my other business, I commenced preaching, and the result of the meeting was some twenty conversions. When that meeting closed, I was very strongly solicited to hold a meeting in Weiser valley twenty-five miles from here, and also to go to Boise City, forty miles in an opposite direction. I went to the first named place. The meeting resulted in fifteen conversions. I then went to Boise City, after telling the young converts to read the Bible, and see whether they were Baptists or not. I did this, thinking it would give me time to determine what was best to do with them, as there was only one Baptist minister in the Territory besides myself, and it seemed hard to constitute little churches and leave them without any pastor. My home and family at that time was one hundred and fifty miles from here and my means very limited. As soon as I left, an old Methodist minister visited both places and tried to get the little flocks to go into his society, which a few did. In the meantime I visited Boise City, and found a Methodist minister holding a protracted meeting, with an immense crowd attending. So I did not preach there at that time, but found a number of Baptist families there who were anxious for an organization. I also found a Congregationalist minister holding regular services in the Baptist meeting-house, and the Baptist families helping to sustain him. I left Boise City and returned to Bluff Station to find that my little flock was in confusion.

The Methodist minister (alluded to above) having attacked Baptist doctrine, Baptist principles, and Baptist usage in general, I found it necessary to defend the truth. The brethren in the meantime

offering inducements for me to move my family to this place, I concluded to do so, and organized a church of twenty-one members. There are now twenty-eight live members. I then went to Weiser valley (aforementioned) and organized a church with twelve members. The brethren here have assisted me to the amount of five dollars, which is more than liberal, as they are poor. Soon after I arrived here with my family, my wife was taken sick, which terminated in death, the 2nd day of October. I have four children, the eldest fifteen years old, (a son), the youngest nine years. At present I am worth perhaps twelve hundred dollars, which is invested in a small farm and stock. My children are going to school in this place, and living with the brethren. I have no relatives in this country. I am giving lessons in vocal music and preaching as much as possible. Music teaching has yielded me two hundred and seventy-five dollars this winter.

Now, I will give you a sample of one week's work which will do for all for the past four months. Last Thursday I left home and went to Weiser by stage, twenty miles; had singing at night; preached Friday at 11 A.M.; took stage at 12 M.; went to Boise City, sixty-five miles, arrived at 1 o'clock A.M.; Saturday at 11 A.M. preached and at night; also Sabbath morning and evening; Monday evening had singing, six miles in the country; Tuesday had prayer-meeting in town; Wednesday had singing in country six miles; Thursday came by stage home forty-five miles; today leisure; tomorrow start on the same round again, except that my course will be different. But the exercise will be the same.

Now, my good brother, I have not written this in a spirit of egotism, but to try to give you a correct idea of the great need of more help in this field. I could, perhaps, live in greater personal ease were I to locate in Boise City, and especially if the Missionary Board was to appoint me to that work, and help sustain me. But I cannot do the preaching that is REQUIRED in this country. Boise City is a very important point, and should have nearly the entire labors of a good minister. But suppose I am the man for that place, what is going to become of the balance of this country? Can I leave all these country places and little churches destitute? God forbid that this should be necessary. I can make a living in this country, and spend nearly all my time in the ministry. We have ministers to whom God has not given the tact to do this, and yet they are men of ability. Send one of that class of men to Boise City and help him, and let me work in the valley and sustain myself.

(Signed)
J. B. Foster

19. Book of Clippings, pp. 1-3. (The italics are mine)

20. B. F. Morrow as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 68.

21. Ibid., p. 69.

> P.S. In looking over this I see that there is no mention made of the labors of another minister who lives in this Territory. He is a good old man; I love him as a Christian brother, but he cannot preach, except in a few outside neighborhoods. He is a farmer, and spends nearly all of his time at farm work."[19]

There are so many valuable bits of information in this letter that we will undoubtedly have occasion to refer to it later, but the things the author wanted to call the reader's especial attention to have been underlined. You will note that Foster in this letter claims to have "found a people without preaching" when he moved to Bluff Station a year before, and to have organized there "a church of twenty-one members." Spriggs called Morrow's attention to this letter, saying that in it Foster claimed that he organized the church at Bluff Station. Morrow replied spiritedly "He didn't organize it, by a whole lot. Foster was not what he should be.....Foster came after the meeting. He happened along and helped me organize the church at Bluff Station."[20] And as for the people being without preaching at Bluff Station, Morrow affirmed: "I preached there at Bluff Station about eleven years....and missed but three meetings.....I got nothing. Uncle Sammy Applegate gave me a three year old steer once, is all."[21]

We find confirmation for Morrow's side of the story through two additional authorities. The anonymous writer of a History of Idaho, on file at Baptist State Headquarters reports:

22. Anonymous, op. cit., p. 8.

23. Minutes of Mt. Pleasant Association, 1873, p. 11.

24. Ibid., p. 11.

> "Payette Valley Baptist Church (Bluff Station) Located at Bluff Station Schoolhouse, Payette Valley, Ada County. Organized with 17 members by Revs. B. F. Morrow and J. B. Foster, February 10, 1873...."[22]

In addition to this, the minutes of the Mt. Pleasant Association which met with the Friendship Church at Walla Walla June 19-21, 1873, contains information which seems to put Foster's claims in a bad light. Both Morrow and Foster were there, Morrow as a delegate from the Wingville Church and Foster as a delegate from the Weiser Church. S. L. Biggerstaff and Joel Weaver, the church clerk, were delegates from the Bluff Station church. The Bluff Station and Weiser churches were admitted to the Association the first day.

The digests of the letters these churches sent to the Association, read in the presence of both men, are interesting:

> "Bluff Station--were constituted a church on Saturday, before the second Lord's Day in February, 1873, by Elder B. F. Morrow, assisted by Elder J. B. Foster. Organized with 17 members, Elder B. F. Morrow is our pastor. Have maintained a weekly prayer meeting. Bro. Morrow has been very prompt in attending us...."[23]

> "Weiser--was organized February 22, 1873, by Elder J. B. Foster; was constituted with 10 members. Have kept up our meetings regular. Elder J. B. Foster is our pastor and he is a very acceptable and arduous laborer for the Lord. We have organized a Union S.S. in our midst in which most of our members labor."[24]

In the light of these facts it is difficult to understand why Foster misrepresented affairs at Bluff Station so completely in his letter to Taylor. It seems clear that credit for the Bluff Station church belongs to Morrow. Out of fair-

25. Gowen, L. W., op. cit., as quoted in Spriggs, op. cit., p. 88.

ness to Foster we must add, as this history will later point out, that he did do a fine work in Idaho, at a time when pastors were few and far between, and Baptists today are deeply in debt to him.

Before closing this chapter, however, we must return to Morrow's work, and the other churches that he organized in that part of the country. After the church at Bluff Station had settled to its work in 1873, Morrow began to reach out into other fields. Morrow still lived in Dixie, but held his membership at Bluff Station. The church at Dixie continued to exist after a fashion, but Morrow seems to have had nothing to do with it. Instead he began to work in the Weiser valley above the area previously covered by Foster. In this he was assisted by Uncle Sammy Applegate, who had been ordained by the Bluff Station church in 1874. These two concentrated their work especially in Mann's Creek, a tributary of the Weiser. Gowen, reporting their work there says: "About a year after the organization of the Bluff Station church, Brother Morrow and Brother Applegate held a series of meetings on Mann's Creek several miles up from the Weiser River. These meetings resulted in so much good that a church was organized, and Brother Applegate became pastor."[25]

Our anonymous authority disagrees with Gowen as to the time that the Mann's Creek church was organized. He has this to say about the church:

"Mann's Creek Baptist Church. Located in Washington County, about 6 miles northeast

26. Anonymous, op. cit., pp. 12, 13.

27. Mrs. C. M. Hixon as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 90.

> of Weiser City. Organized with 9 members by Revs. S. W. Applegate and John Warner, March 16, 1878. Brother Applegate served the church until November, 1886. In 1878 the church came into the Mt. Pleasant Association of Oregon. It also helped organize the Idaho Association in 1879. There is nothing reported but ordinary routine work until 1882, when the church reported it had no pastor, and had had none for two years, and was 'living at a poor dying rate.' Occasionally some passing brother preached for it. As several Baptists had recently moved into the vicinity, they were praying that some shepherd might come to gather them into a working band. In 1889 Rev. S. W. Applegate preached for the church occasionally. Membership scattered. In 1890 no regular preaching. But few members left. No later reports."[26]

You will note that Morrow is not mentioned by this authority as having had a part in organizing Mann's Creek, and although Spriggs seems to feel that he did, it seems a mute question as to whether he was actually present at the organization itself. But at any rate, we do know that he took an active part in the early life of the church through the meetings that were held which resulted in its being born. Mrs. C. M. Hixon, daughter of John Applegate, a brother of Uncle Sammy Applegate, moved to that locality with her father in 1878. They lived at first on Monroe Creek and then later moved over into Mann's Creek. Her husband taught school in the Upper Mann's Creek School House where Morrow and Applegate held the services. Speaking of the church she recalled:

> "We lived about half a mile below that school house. Mr. Morrow and Uncle Sammy held meetings there. The church was organized before we went there. Mr. Morrow got terribly excited, sweated, was very loud. But told good truths. He would exert himself until you would think he would fall."[27]

28. Minutes of New Hope Baptist Church, p. 2.

Mann's Creek Church was admitted into the Mt. Pleasant Association, as indicated by the quotation above, June 13, 1878. At that time it reported a Mr. Langley as clerk, and a membership of seven.

Although things are a little hazy concerning the details of the organization of the Mann's Creek Church, we labor under no such handicaps as far as the story of the New Hope Baptist Church is concerned. When the writer of this thesis began his research work for it, almost the first material that fell into his hands was the minute book of the New Hope Baptist Church, still in the possession of the church clerk of the First Baptist Church of Caldwell, and he made a transcription of these minutes to refer to when writing this thesis.

The New Hope Church was organized Saturday, March 4th, 1876, apparently in the Dixie School House, with seven charter members, B. F. Morrow acting as moderator, and R. L. Morrow as clerk.[28] Spriggs states that this R. L. Morrow was the oldest son of B. F. Morrow. A month later the church met again to elect officers, and besides the two mentioned above, Hardy Johnson was elected deacon. From the very first the church began to grow, taking in several members the first year. May 5th, 1877, "Bro. M. Pott came forward and was received into full fellowship in the Church." He had been a member of the old Dixie church, but hung out for over a year after the new church was organized. On Sunday, August 5, 1877, after 11 o'clock service "B. F. Morrow was received in

29. Minutes, Mt. Pleasant Association, p.

full fellowship by letter from Bluff Station United Baptist Church." The next month, Sister Mary Foster, the wife of J. B. Foster, was received as a candidate for Baptism, and became an interested worker in the church. Spriggs states that the Fosters were then living in Boise, and apparently made the trip down to Dixie for this purpose.

In the fall of this year Uncle Sammy Applegate preached several times to the church and assisted Morrow in services held there for several weeks in December which resulted in five additions to the church. In March, 1878, the church responded to the request of the Bluff Station Church and sent a ministerial deacon to assist in the ordination of John Warner to the ministry. In May the church voted to apply for membership in the Mt. Pleasant Association of Oregon and a committee was appointed to prepare a letter to the association. Brothers M. Pott, Hardy Johnson, and B. F. Morrow were appointed delegates to the association.

The church was received into the Mt. Pleasant Association along with the Mann's Creek Church on June 13, 1878. Two days later, "On motion, at the request of the New Hope, Mann's Creek and Bluff Station churches, letters of dismission were granted from this body to form an association of their own."[29] By inference we are led to believe that the New Hope Church, under Morrow's guidance was the leader in this movement to form an association in Idaho. Two months later they voted that their Moderator (Morrow) be appointed as a "Delegate to the Bluff Station Church to ascertain if

30. Minutes, New Hope Baptist Church, p. 39.

that church would combine in organizing an Association." By November of that year sentiment in the two churches for organizing an association was such that Brothers Hardy Johnson and M. Pott were asked to see to associational matters when they were at Bluff Station sitting in on a council meeting to settle differences existing between Brothers Hunt and Biven of that church.

They reported to the monthly meeting in January, 1879, that "the churches would meet with the Bluff Station Church on Friday before the 2nd Sabbath in May A.D. 1879 for the purpose of organizing an association." However, trouble in the Bluff Station church between Hunt and Biven continued and apparently forced the postponement of the organization meeting for the proposed association. "On motion of Brother Pott, the New Hope Church requested the other Churches to combine and defer Organizing the Association till Firday before the 2nd Sabbath in October."[30] In September the church voted to have R. L. Morrow prepare a letter to be read at the organizing meeting, and in October they elected delegates and voted $8.00 for the minute fund of the association.

On October 4, 1879, the church was visited by Rev. J. I. Huff, the General Missionary of the Missionary and Education Society of Oregon, who had been visiting the churches of the Boise Valley. After hearing Huff preach, the church contributed $20 for missionary purposes. This was a sizeable offering for those days, and speaks well of the

31. Minutes, First Idaho Association, 1879, pp. 3ff.

spirit that Morrow had built into the church. Huff stayed in Dixie that week, visiting the Baptist families in the area and then attended the meeting to organize the association at Bluff Station.

The minutes of that first association meeting in Idaho are so interesting that the author includes part of them as reported for us by Spriggs:

> "On Friday, October 10, 1879 at 2 pm.... according to previous appointment, a convention composed of Delegates from the following named churches, holding letters of dismission from the Mt. Pleasant Association, met with the Baptist church at Bluff Station, Ada County, Idaho.... for the purpose of organizing an association, viz.; Bluff Station Church, New Hope Church, and Mann's Creek Church.
>
> "The convention was called to order by Elder B. F. Morrow, and proceeded to effect an organization of the Association by electing Elder J. I. Huff, Moderator, and Elder D. P. Maryatt, Clerk, and Bro. John Neal, Treasurer. The following delegates representing their churches were enrolled:
>
> Bluff Station Church
> C. M. Nichols
> John Bivans
> J. A. Heriford
> W. A. Neal
> Isaac Neal
> John Neal
>
> The New Hope Church
> Elder B. F. Morrow
> M. Pott
> J. W. Bloom
> Miss Katie Pott
> Miss Maggie Pott
>
> Mann's Creek Church
> O. Summer
> Mrs. Nancy Summer
>
> "The New Hampshire Article of Faith as contained in the 'Enc. of Religious Knowledge' were adopted, also the Covenant contained in the same."[31]

A preamble and constitution were then adopted. The Association as organized was called "The Idaho Association of United Baptist Churches", and was "for the purpose of perpetuating our union and maintaining a correspondence with each

32. Ibid., p. 5.

other." The first day's sessions closed with prayer by Elder B. F. Morrow.

The next day's business was concerned primarily with meeting of the several committees and the receiving of their reports. Morrow was chairman of three of these committees, the reports of one of them being of special importance, i.e. The Committee on Home Missions:

> "Your committee would recommend that, in view of the extent of the fields around us which we are unable to meet for want of means, a hearty cooperation with Our Missionary and Educational Society for Oregon, Washington and Idaho Territories and British Columbia (is asked) in furnishing the means to sustain a man on this field during the coming year, and that to further this object we take up a collection after the sermon tomorrow morning. 2nd, Whereas, the plan of that convention is to take pledges.....to support their Missionaries, that we recommend the same for adoption by the churches of this Association."[32]

This report led to definite action. We read that "In accordance with the recommendations of this report, the following named brethren were appointed as a Missionary Board for the field included within the territory of this association: Elder B. F. Morrow of New Hope Church; Bro. O. Summer of Mann's Creek Church; Elder S. W. Applegate and John Bivans of Bluff Station Church." And so began the Home Mission Board of the Association, which eventually became the Board of Managers of the present Idaho Baptist Convention. Morrow was on it, as we would expect him to be. Indeed, a reading of the minutes of the association lead us to see just how much Baptists in the State were dependent upon him for leadership in all matters. And that he was a forward looking man,

33. Gowen, L. W., op.cit., as quoted in Spriggs, op. cit., p. 100.

a person with great vision, is reason enough for all of us to be profoundly grateful that the Lord set him in the midst of the Boise Valley at the time that he did.

Saturday's sessions had been opened with a sermon by Elder Maryatt, who spoke from Mark 2:25-26. After receiving the reports, the presence of Huff at the association was recognized by a resolution which thanked the Missionary and Education Society for "the invaluable services already rendered upon this field by our beloved Bro. J. T. Huff." The Association adjourned to meet with the New Hope Church on Friday before the first Sabbath in June, 1880. However, a full schedule of preaching services had been made for Sunday, so none of the delegates went home. In the morning Elder J. T. Huff and Elder Maryatt preached, and an offering for Home Missions was taken which amounted to $27.45. In the afternoon Elder B. F. Morrow preached and Elder Maryatt preached again. Thus was "Columbus Day, 1879" observed by Baptists in Idaho. So, the Bluff Station Church which Morrow helped to organize, although it later died out, found a lasting place in the history of the denomination in the State because of this Association meeting. As Gowen says:

> "We may well pause a moment and turn our thots again to these twelve pioneer Baptists who so many years ago met in the little rough school house in the Payette Valley. It is possible that the organization that had so humble a beginning will continue to meet annually until the glorious King shall come." 33

Still another story must be told before we have recounted in full the work of B. F. Morrow. But this story

34. Spriggs, op. cit., p. 61.

which concerns the decision to move the New Hope Church from Dixie to the new railroad town of Caldwell, and the building of the Caldwell church more properly comes under the chapter "The Railroad Comes to Idaho" and so will be told then.

Morrow continued to serve the New Hope Church in its new location as pastor until 1888, after which he dropped out of active work in the State, although he continued to reside in Caldwell, and lived to celebrate his one hundredth birthday in his home on 501 Blaine Street on March 31, 1926. Rev. W. T. S. Spriggs visited him in July, 1923, and

> "found a small, aged man, rather frail, wearing a full flowing beard. He was venerable and characteristically typical of the pioneer he is. For a man of 97 he was quite alert in manner. He is not a man of the schools....Judging from his manner and his words, I could understand what had been told me of his style and temperment. I asked Mr. Keller (a pioneer settler in Idaho who had known Morrow since 1864) if he had heard Morrow preach. He said that Morrow hardly ever preached a sermon that he didn't hear. He was very enthusiastic; a terrible exhorter; too excitable. But as conscientious a man as I have ever met. He was generally well respected. But did not have education enough to keep up with the times."[34]

This last sentence probably explains why Morrow dropped out of the work. Better qualified men finally appeared on the field, and he had the good judgment to recognize that his time of effective service was over, and so stepped aside that those better fitted for the ministry might carry on. In writing this chapter the author has been strongly reminded of the fact that our Lord is able to use all kinds of men in his service. Hamilton followed in the footsteps of the beloved John. Morrow was more of Peter's type. But both

served effectively, and it can be truly said that although Morrow was unlearned, he more than made up for it in zeal, and thus became the rock upon which the denomination was built in Idaho.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BOISE

There is probably not a more difficult question to answer in connection with the Baptist History of Idaho than the question of when the First Baptist Church of Boise was first organized. There is no question concerning who organized it, for all authorities are agreed that J. B. Foster was the responsible party. Nor does there seem to be any question concerning the month of the year that it was organized, for all are agreed that it took place in May. But there is confusion on the matter of the year in which the event took place. After much study we are convinced that the year 1872, claimed as the year of organization by the church in its manual published in 1916, is wrong. The letter quoted in full from J. B. Foster in the preceding chapter gives us almost conclusive evidence on that, for he states in that letter that he came from Oregon to Idaho "one year ago" which would make it February, 1873, and that his "home and family at that time was one hundred fifty miles from here (Bluff Station)...." Thus it would seem that Foster was not even in the State in 1872, and so could not have possibly organized the church then. The question as to whether the organization was effected in May, 1873, (as Gowen claims) or May, 1874, (as Spriggs thinks) is more open to debate, and will be dealt with later. But first we must concern ourselves briefly with what happened to the work which Hamil-

1. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 6, Number 124 (May 16, 1870) p. 3.

2. Ibid., Volume 10, Number 32 (October 14, 1873) p. 3.

ton started in Boise, after his departure for California in the summer of 1867.

The Sunday School which Hamilton had organized apparently had been left in good hands, for it continued its work, uninterrupted as far as we are able to determine until Foster arrived. We pick up an occasional bit of information concerning these intervening years from articles in the Statesman. In February, 1870, the Editor wrote: "We attended the Sabbath School at the Baptist Church on Sunday afternoon and were well entertained.....There are some zealous workers engaged in conducting this school..." In the May 10, 1870, edition we read that "The entertainment to be given by the little folks for the purchase of a bell for the Baptist church will come off one night this week."[1] This entertainment was given May 14 "under the direction of Miss Lizzie Jeter." It was more than three years before it could be said that "The bell for the Baptist Church arrived here Saturday....Wt. 603 pounds and pronounced by judges to be of excellent make....A belfry will be erected and the bell put in place in a few days."[2] On October 25th it was announced that "it will cost $150 to hang the new bell in the Baptist Church Steeple," so apparently there was another wait while this money was raised. Our anonymous authority is responsible for the statement that this bell was afterwards sold to the Methodist church in Boise.

Not only was the church building used for Sunday School but it also seems to have been used for about every other

3. Ibid., Volume 6, Number 60 (December 11, 1869) p. 2.

4. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 9, Number 87 (February 11, 1873) p. 3.

sort of meeting imaginable. We are not surprised to learn that the church was used by preachers of other denominations as desired, and that the Methodist and Congregational churches of Boise were organized in it, as was the Bible Society of the Territory of Idaho. The building was used, almost from the very first, as the public school building for Boise, even after a school house had been built."[3] It was also the meeting place of the Good Templers for four or five years before their own hall was opened on Washington's birthday, 1870. In November, 1872, a Lyceum Course of lectures was planned, and they were given that winter in the church. Thus we see that the building erected by Hamilton became the civic center of the fast growing town of Boise.

The year 1872 saw the arrival of Rev. Myron Eels, a Congregational minister, in Boise. He immediately began to preach in the Baptist church, according to the Statesman. In November, 1872, the Statesman reports the arrival of a Rev. R. M. Gwinn of the Methodist church. Gwinn set right to work getting a Methodist church organized, but he used the Good Templers Hall and the Baptist Church to hold services in. Apparently when Mr. Eels of the Congregational Church was using the Baptist building, Gwinn used the Good Templer Hall. We note from the Statesman's notices during the month of February, 1873, that Eels was preaching in the Baptist church.[4]

At this point we are ready to refer back to that letter of Foster's quoted in full in the previous chapter.

5. Book of Clippings, p. 2.

6. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 9, Number 96 (March 4, 1873) p. 3. (The italics are mine)

7. Ibid., Volume 9, Number 107 (April 1, 1873) p. 3.

Our readers will remember that Foster, commenting on his trip to Boise in February, 1873, had this to say:

> ".....In the meantime I visited Boise City, and found a Methodist minister holding a protracted meeting with an immense crowd attending. So I did not preach there at that time, but found a number of Baptist families there who were anxious for an organization. I also found a Congregationalist minister holding regular services in the Baptist meeting-house, and the Baptist families helping to sustain him. I left Boise City and returned to Bluff Station..."[5]

In this letter, Foster makes absolutely no reference to having tried to organize a church there in Boise at any time previous to the time the letter was written, and since the letter is dated February 19, 1874, it seems to the author that on the basis of the letter alone we are justified in stating that the Boise church was not organized before 1874. Surely, if Foster had done so, he would have reported it to Brother Taylor, who had evidently written him a letter to sound him out on the situation in the Boise Valley.

From the Statesman we know that Foster was in Boise around the first of March, for the paper on March 4, 1873, says: "Rev. Foster, Baptist minister from Eastern Oregon, has organized a church on the Weiser (cf with Foster's letter) and intends to organize one here about the first of May."[6] Spriggs states that this is the first time Foster's name is mentioned in the Statesman, and that it sounds like a first notice to him. On April Fool's Day, 1873, the Statesman carried the following advertisement: "The Rev. J. B. Foster, Baptist Minister, will preach at the Baptist Church this evening at half past....."[7]

8. Ibid., Volume 9, Number 121 (May 3, 1873) p. 2.

Apparently Foster's declaration of intentions to organize a Baptist church around the first of May spurred Mr. Eels the Congregationalist minister to action, for we read in the Statesman for May 3, 1873, "A Congregational Church will be organized at the Baptist church tomorrow morning."[8] Eels apparently thought that he would have to leave the Baptist church soon, so organized at once, knowing that the first man to organize would get a large part of those accustomed to attend services at the Baptist church. Apparently Foster, after the Congregational church was organized, came to the conclusion that there were not enough persons left interested in a Baptist church, and so decided to postpone organization. At least if he did organize he kept it a deep dark secret from the Statesman, from Brother Taylor, and from even the Mt. Pleasant Association. On June 19-21, 1873, Foster attended the sessions of the Mt. Pleasant Association in Walla Walla. At that meeting he reported the organization of the church on the Weiser, but does not even mention Boise City.

Indeed, for the remainder of the year the Statesman has nothing in it to indicate that Foster was in Boise at all. From Foster's letter to Taylor we deduce that he must have resumed services in Boise sometime in November, 1873, for he outlines his weekly schedule that he has been following for the past four months. The Statesman for April 18, 1874, carried this announcement: "Rev. J. B. Foster will

9. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 10, Number 112 (April 18, 1874) p. 3.

10. Ibid., Volume 10, Number 117 (April 30, 1874)

11. Jubilee Volume: Baptist Home Missions in North America, a full report of proceedings and addresses of the Jubilee Meeting, Temple Court, Beekman Street, New York, 1883, p. 565.

12. Minutes, Mt. Pleasant Association, 1874.

13. The Baptist Standard, Volume 21, Number 43 (July 23, 1874) p. 5.

hold divine services on the first and third Sundays of each month."[9] He apparently moved his family to Boise soon after this announcement appeared, for the Statesman says on April 30th: "Our new carrier is Master Charles Foster."[10] All of this fits into the records of the American Baptist Home Mission Society as found in the Jubilee Volume: "Boise City; J. B. Foster----May 1874, 1875."[11]

Apparently the first thing that Foster did after his appointment by the Home Mission Society was to organize the church. At least, when he attended the Mt. Pleasant Association at Wingville, Oregon, June 4-6, 1874, he reported the church organized, and it was received into the Association. The statistics for Boise City are given thus: "Received: 1 by baptism; 4 by letter; 10 by relation--total 15."[12] Since Foster was present at the Association in 1873 and did not report the organization of the church, and since he did report it at the association meeting in 1874, it seems obvious to the writer that the church was organized sometime between the two association meetings. And since all sketches of the early Boise City church history are agreed on May as the month of organization, the writer is inclined to state definitely that the church was organized May 5th, 1874. The evidence that this is so seems overwhelming when we read in The Standard of Chicago for July 23, 1874, the following news item:

> "We learn by a note from Sister Brumbach, that a Baptist church has been organized in Boise City with a good minister and a flourishing Sunday School."[13]

14. Spriggs, W. T. S., A History of Baptists in Southern Idaho, Mss p. 84.

15. Gowen, L. W., Baptists in South Idaho, 1864-1904, as quoted by Spriggs, Ibid., p. 85.

16. American Baptist Home Mission Society Report, 1875, p. 28.

The charter members of the organization effected by Foster in 1874 were as follows: J. B. Foster, A. E. Flourney, Mrs. A. E. Flourney, George White, Harmon Cox, D. L. Gray, J. M. Thompson, Mary Basil, Ellen Gray, Elizabeth Freeman, Mary Straight, Harriet Brumbach, Mary Gray, Elizabeth Crawford, Mary Pinkham.[14] Gowen's Baptists in South Idaho, 1864-1904, has this to say concerning the church:

> ".....The church started with 15 members and had the advantage of a house of worship erected 7 years before. The building, however, was already badly out of repair and poorly suited to the needs of the new church. Under Bro. Foster's management, assisted by Col. A. E. Flournoy and others the title to the property was made secure, the building repaired and completed by being covered with rustic outside and matched board lining within. Brother Foster continued to preach occasionally for the church during 1873 and 1874 when he closed his labors and for a time entered secular pursuits."[15]

The Annual Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society given May 27, 1875, has this to say concerning Boise City:

> "During the past year your board has helped sustain one missionary in this territory. Rev. J. B. Foster has labored at Boise City during the past year and in a recent letter says: 'I do feel the need of an able brother to counsel with. Only think of my position, with only one brother Baptist minister within two hundred miles, and only one in all Eastern Oregon and Idaho Territory that has sufficient education to come to this place and preach with any chance of success, and he is three hundred miles from here, with more work at home than he can do. For the sake of the cause of Christ, for the sake of the souls of our fellow men in this part, and for the sake of the credit of our denomination, send us a good energetic minister for one year to labor in Boise City, and allow me to labor in the country. There is a great work here to be done, and one man cannot labor to any advantage."[16]

17. Book of Clippings, p. 34.

18. Anonymous, Baptist History of Southern Idaho, p. 4.

We do not know why Foster was not reappointed--whether the society decided not to support him for another year, or whether he felt himself not qualified to meet the situation. At least both letters which we have quoted from him seem to indicate that he would much rather minister in the country and have someone else work at Boise.

Of the period between the close of Foster's pastorate and the new start made in 1881, little is known, and that little is certainly not inspiring. For six long years the church had no pastor, and as is to be expected under such circumstances, things went from bad to worse. While we believe the dates in the following quotation to be wrong as quoted by Spriggs, Professor Brumback described the situation thus:

> "Mr. Foster's pastorate closed in 1873 (cf above) and the church soon became practically disorganized; a faithful few long endeavored to maintain a church relationship, but it was hard to do without a spiritual leader. It was eight years till the church was again set on its feet."[17]

Sometime in 1877, certain parties in Boise unsuccessfully tried to appropriate the church property. One authority states that Mason Brayman, a Baptist, and Governor of the Territory of Idaho was responsible for this attempt, but that he "was thwarted by the prompt and decisive action of Brethren Foster and Flourney, who coolly informed him that 'he had just 25 minutes to produce the deed for the church or....!'"[18] Rev. C. H. Matoon, writing about this dark period in the Boise church history, reports what some of the older brethren and sisters told him as follows:

19. The Pacific Baptist (March 15, 1888)

20. The Beacon (February 1, 1879) as quoted in Spriggs, op. cit., p.108.

> "They bought a bell; after this the history of the church is checkered. The Bible mysteriously disappeared and has never been heard of since; their bell was sold.....and taken away one morning before sunrise. It now adorns the M.E. church nearby. Their property was sold and a deed made....But Bro. Flournoy heard of it and informed the maker of the deed that he had just 25 minutes to produce the deed for the church.....The deed was produced. The A.B.H.M.S. ..which had a claim on the church for money loaned, threatened to sell the property....to Presbyterians but such indignation was manifested that the Presbyterians were afraid to buy."19

About this time Governor Brayman secured a parcel of ground, lots 5 & 6 of Block 45, and deeded them to a Rev. Mr. Condit, October 24, 1877. These lots were afterward returned and deeded by him to parties in trust (George White and A. W. Flourney) for a Baptist church. Whether the deeding of these lots had anything to do with the Governor's unsuccessful attempt to obtain the church property, the writer has been unable to ascertain. At any rate, it's an ill wind that blows no good, for the lots mentioned above are the property on which the present First Baptist Church now stands in Boise.

Mrs. J. B. Foster, writing to the Baptist Beacon in 1879, continues this sad story for us thus:

> "The New Year has come, but brought no new encouragement to the Baptist Church in this city. There are but few of us here. We have a Baptist Church, but no preaching. The Presbyterians are occupying it now, and have a Sunday School. They expect to go into their house ere long. Then we are expecting to organize a Baptist S.S. and keep it up until we are able to get a minister...."20

21. Ibid., (April, 1879) as quoted in Spriggs, op. cit., p.109.

22. Ibid., (October, 1879) as quoted in Spriggs, op. cit., p. 109.

23. Ibid., (November, 1879) as quoted in Spriggs, op. cit., p. 109.

Several months later Mrs. Foster wrote the following letter in the interests of the Boise church:

> "I am requested to say that it is the belief of some of the Baptists here, that if we had a good, live minister we could do something. And now to help all I can, I will be the first to make known what I will do if the Board will send one, or if someone will volunteer to come. We will give him three months board free of charge, and then some other member can carry on....A single man I believe would do very well....his board will cost him nothing, and he will have the house; there will be no rent....Some of our members left and joined the Methodists...all because they had no hope of there ever being a Baptist Preacher here."[21]

Whether in answer to these pleas or not we do not know, but in August, 1879, Rev. J. T. Huff, General Missionary for the Pacific Northwest visited the church, spoke favorably of the prospects, but stayed only a few weeks. Reporting this visit to the Beacon, Huff wrote:

> "On my arrival....Bro. Foster with his warm heart gave me a welcome....a Christian home it is. I remained two weeks. The Governor of the Ty. claims to be a Baptist, but would not promise a dollar for the bleeding, dying cause in his city....I visited him at his house.... They are $600 in debt to the building fund of the B.H.M.S. There are difficulties that impede the work."[22]

> "Our house is well located, the best, I think, in the city. It is quite a good house, but needs repairing .... (He speaks then of Hamilton's work and says:) One sister still lives here who was a member of the church he organized at that time. The organization has not been kept up. I find 28 Baptists here.....My congregations have been good."[23]

Huff made no successful move toward settling a pastor on the field, so that on the whole his visit served only to discourage the local people the more and the result was a disastrous reaction.

24. The Beacon (November, 1880) as quoted in Spriggs, op. cit., p.111.

25. The Beacon (January, 1881) as quoted in Spriggs, op. cit., p. 111.

26. Spriggs, op. cit., p. 111.

At last the day of the awakening arrived. Apparently the pleas of the Fosters and the reports of Huff began to bear fruit in Baptist circles. At the meeting of the Convention of the North Pacific Coast in October, 1880, "Measures were taken looking toward a speedy settlement of pastors at Astoria and Boise City"[24] At the board meeting of this convention in January, 1881, "Rev. J. D. Pierce, once of this state (Oregon) but now of Laramie, Wyoming, was appointed to take charge of the work at Walla Walla, W.T."[25] Spriggs describes Pierce as follows:

> "Pierce had done an excellent work in Oregon having been pastor in Portland in 1875. He was a full grown steam engine and a near relative to an earthquake. But his health gave way and he had to get back to the mountains."[26]

The North Pacific Coast Convention decided to make use of Pierce on his way through to Walla Walla to bring life to the Boise Church, and requested him to plan to stop over at Boise for awhile. Apparently this was arranged by agreement with the home mission board, for we read in the Jubilee Volume that Pierce received an appointment for one month from the American Baptist Home Mission Society to go to Boise.

On his arrival, Pierce found but two living members of the church in town, but he rolled up his sleeves and went to work, and the Boise folk soon realized that they had a live wire to deal with. He wrote to the Beacon that he thought he could save the property and the church, but that it was too late to save what they once held. Meetings

27. Manual, First Baptist Church, Boise 1916, p. 9.

were held each evening for two weeks after his arrival, and the meeting-house was crowded to its utmost capacity. Four of the old members remained true: Brethren J. M. Thompson and D. L. Gray, and Sisters A. E. Flourney and Mary Pinkham. Brother A. W. Flourney, who did such heroic work in saving the church property from the machinations of the Governor had passed away to that fairer land like "a shock of corn fully ripe." But others expressed interest in a church and declared themselves ready to unite if a permanent organization could be set up. So March 17, 1881, a meeting was held and the church reorganized under Pierce's leadership with four members of the 1872 organization and nine others making up the charter member list.[27]

Our anonymous historian has preserved the following anecdote concerning Pierce's visit to Boise which certainly bears out Spriggs' observation that he was a "full-grown steam engine!"

> "He came into Boise a stranger, but almost the first man he met was an old schoolmate and friend, though not a Baptist, (but if anything, rather skeptical) very cordially invited Brother Pierce to make his house his home while in the city. Pierce soon made his business known, at which his friend laughed, but finally agreed that if Pierce could raise $100 for that purpose he would pay the last $5 of it (that is, to paint the churchhouse). Pierce hunted up some of the brethren, but they talked discouragingly about it, though they agreed to gather at the meeting house about 10 o'clock the next day to consider the matter.
>
> "By daylight the next morning brother Pierce had a bucket of paint and a ladder and was busy putting it on the house, with one side pretty well along when the brethren met. They were

28. Anonymous, op. cit., p. 5.

29. Ibid.

> surprised, but he said--'Never mind me, brethren! Go in and hold your meeting if you want to! But this house is going to be painted!' The meeting was not held; but some of the brethren got the necessary articles and helped him so that the job was soon completed.
>
> "And the community hearing that 'a live man had come to town' crowded the house at night to hear him preach. A day or two after he said to his host:
>
> "'Didn't you agree to pay the last $5 on each $100 I secured for our church?'
>
> "'Well, no,' said the man, eyeing him closely, 'but I'll do it.'
>
> "'Very well, I'll take $25 from you!' His host was astonished, but after carefully examining the subscription list, he paid the money."[28]

The church elected a new Board of Trustees, and then charged the district $12 a month for the house for school purposes, and paid the American Baptist Home Mission Society $50 on the debt. Before the month was over a Baptist Sunday School was started, and on the 29th of the month the church paid $50 more on the debt and promised $650 to the American Baptist Home Mission Society during the year if an acceptable pastor could be secured and paid for the present year from other sources. The trustees deposited $100 in the bank for the debt due the Home Mission Society, "provided the said Society would send a pastor to take charge of the Baptist church at Boise City, on or before July 1, 1881. Otherwise the money was to revertto the church, and the clerk was to notify the Society of this."[29]

Pierce hit the city of Boise like a ton of dynamite, and so great was his influence that upon leaving the place

30. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 17, Number 111 (March 31, 1881) p. 2.

after only a month's stay, the Statesman editorialized as follows:

> "Only three or four members of the old Baptist church were left....a small debt hung over the building and they came near losing it through those who ought to have been its friends. The few members that remained became so disheartened that they had about given up hope....The Rev. D. J. Pierce arrived..... Mr. Pierce proved to be a man of good ability and possessed of considerable magnetism. He found many Baptists who have moved in....and some who had joined other churches who would return....He found Brothers Joslyn and McKeen (M.E.) and Rev. McFarland, the Presbyterian minister ready to lend a helping hand.... nobody had a cold word.....The result of Mr. Pierce's work was certainly a creditable one, and not only speaks well for him, but for our city. Nearly 20 members joined the church and almost $600 was raised to pay off the indebtedness....and the church building received a new coat of paint and they have a promise of a local minister. Mr. Pierce has left for Walla Walla and will long be favorably remembered by our people."[30]

Out of all fairness to the facts involved, it should be said at this point that one of the reasons why Pierce was able to do such a fine job in Boise was because a change of policy on the part of the American Baptist Home Mission Society made it possible for them to give him their unqualified support. One of the first things that Pierce did when he hit town was to write up an article for the Statesman explaining this change of policy. Because of its historical interest it is quoted in part below:

> "I regret to find a general impression in this town, based upon past movements of the B.H.M.S. that the Baptist church of Boise is extinct and its property for sale. For several years the Mission Society was embarrassed by debt, and adopted a mistaken policy of selling property in Western towns, when not at once

31. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 17, Number 102 (March 10, 1881) p. 3.

utilized. To say nothing of the illegality of selling property deeded on trust for a specific purpose, this policy was found to be a ruinous one...while the reversion of sentiment always aroused, destroyed all further influence until the property was replaced.

"While the money received was intended to be held on trust, the prejudice against Baptists was increased and loss occured on every side. As I have opposed this policy in four states and territories, I am speaking advisedly in saying that this ruinous policy was everywhere a detriment....but I rejoice to assure the Baptists of Idaho that the sun has arisen on the Mission Society and a complete revolution has already been accomplished.....Rev. J. C. Baker, President of the Baptist Convention (of North Pacific Coast) wrote to a sister in Boise City, Feb. 2, 1881 concerning myself as follows:

"'We have instructed him to stay at Boise City; hold a meeting and arrange for the settlement of a pastor, if the way is open. Our Boards are now in a condition to help sustain a man at Boise, if the people there will help.' Dr. Morehouse of the H.M.S. writes: 'I am glad you are strongly drawn to Walla Walla and Boise City, for they need ministerial care if any places do!'

"An invitation will be given on Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock (March 13th) for persons to unite with this church, and next week we hope to know just how much the people of Boise City want a Baptist Church and a Baptist pastor. The decision lies entirely with you. I publish the above to assure you that I am here as the representative of two cooperating societies, each anxious to aid you when your willingness is made known. Get your letters ready, make up your minds, and do your duty to your God and your fellowmen."[31]

---D. J. Pierce

True to the promise that Pierce had made for it, the Baptist Convention of the North Pacific Coast immediately took steps to locate a pastor for Boise. At its board meeting at Salem, Oregon, April 12-15, 1881, the Beacon reports the following action was taken: "Rev. L. L. Shearer was

32. The Beacon, (May, 1881) as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 118.

33. Jubilee Volume, op. cit., p. 565.

34. Minutes, Baptist Convention of North Pacific Coast, 1881.

35. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 4, Number 5 (May, 1882) p. 133.

recommended for settlement at Boise City, I. T., with $100 to defray expenses of reaching field. Salary to be fixed when on the ground."[32]

We learn from the May issue of the Beacon that Shearer was of Lawnville, Pennsylvania, and that he had been highly recommended for this position by the Secretary of the Home Mission Society, Rev. H. L. Morehouse. The action of the Board of the Baptist Convention of the North Pacific Coast produced immediate results in the east where the Home Board appointed L. L. Shearer to Boise for one year, "July 1881-1882."[33] Shearer apparently was not able to begin his work until August, for the Minutes of the Baptist Convention of North Pacific Coast for 1881 have this to say:

> "Rev. L. L. Shearer, a minister of standing in Pennsylvania, highly recommended from reliable sources, has been secured as pastor at this far off point (Boise). He reached the field in August, and we hear good reports from this important city."[34]

Shearer apparently was a worker, also, for he was able to write in May, 1882, to the Home Mission Society of "a series of meetings in which upwards of forty professed saving faith. Several have united with us, while many went to other churches. This church has been very much revived and encouraged. The membership has been more than doubled in the last nine months."[35] The Boise Church was not represented at the Association meeting at Mann's Creek, October 13-14, 1882, but did send a report which showed a total accession of 27 members, and monies raised for all purposes totaling $600. They also reported that they were "repair-

36. Minutes, First Idaho Association, 1882.

37. Minutes, First Idaho Association, 1883.

ing house of worship, expense about $800. Also striving to pay off indebtedness of $168."[36] Apparently the church property was indeed in need of repair, for Shearer stated in a part of his letter not quoted above, that the revival meetings referred to had to be closed because of the "unsuitable condition of the room."

For Boise the year 1883 was a year of blessing and prosperity. Shearer was busier than ever, having been elected County Superintendent of Schools. The church building was renovated on the inside, possibly in preparation for the entertaining of the First Idaho Association. The report of the church to the Association which met within its walls on October 4, 5 and 6, states that the debt had been paid and that there were eleven additions to the church for the year.[37] Shearer, reporting to the Home Mission Society, wrote as follows:

> "We have not made satisfactory progress, yet we have accomplished more than any other church in town. When I took charge of this interest there were eleven members, six of these only residing here. We now have 55, the most of which are very zealous Christians. Two will have to be dropped.
>
> "The one great difficulty with which we have to contend is the unsettled state of the people. They are coming and going all the time. About twenty of our members have moved away. Several of these were the best we had in both the devotional and financial work. Their names are still on our book, but we will have to give them letters when they are permanently settled near a Baptist Church. That was the agreement. While we do not have them here, they will work for the Lord wherever they are.
>
> "The new railroad will soon bring a large number of people. I want to spend about one-

38. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 5, Number 8 (August, 1883) p. 176.

39. Minutes, American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1885.

> half of my time this summer in outside mission work, at Weiser City, seventy miles off; Fayette, fifty miles; Middleton, twenty-five miles; Atlanta, one hundred and twenty miles. I would like to visit Wood River, but it is hardly possible."[38]

Rev. L. L. Shearer served Boise as pastor for four years in all. His work for the Home Mission Society is summarized in the following table: "Missionary, L. L. Shearer; Years 4; Baptisms, 23; Letter, 28; S.S. Av. Att. 61; Collections for Missions $28.65, Miss'y Co. $149.35."[39]

1. Brosnan, Cornelius J., History of State of Idaho, Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1935, p. 289.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF THE RAILROADS

As was to be expected, the coming of the railroads to Idaho profoundly influenced subsequent events in the State. Nor was Baptist history any exception. The building of the railroads affected disasterously some of our churches, and in other cases resulted in the establishing of churches at points where in all probability there would have never been any work. The first railroad constructed in Idaho was known as the Utah and Northern. On November 1, 1877, it crossed the state line from Utah, passing northward through Pocatello, Blackfoot and Eagle Rock (now known as Idaho Falls) and connected Ogden, Utah, with Helena, Montana.[1] It was a narrow guage road built primarily to connect the mining country of Montana and Eastern Idaho with the trans-continental railroad, the Union Pacific. Three Baptist Churches were established along its route in the Upper Snake River Valley: Idaho Falls, Blackfoot, and Pocatello.

When Rev. Dwight Spencer visited Eastern Idaho in 1881, he was greatly impressed by the country and wrote a stirring account of the country and its needs which was published in the Home Mission Monthly. This article was read by a devout Christian woman in Illinois and she immediately decided to do something about it. Leaving her home in Illinois and directed by the Holy Spirit, she came to

2. Tidings of Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society, Number 12, (July,1882) p. 2.

Eagle Rock, Idaho. The repair shops and round house for the Utah and Northern were first located here. It had a population varying from 600 to 800 with several outlying settlements. Mrs. Rebecca Mitchell, the woman who heard the Macedonian call, described her advent at Eagle Rock thus:

> "I reached this place June 6th and found it to be a town of 600 inhabitants, without day school, Sunday School, or any religious services, but to the right and left saloons. I secured a shanty of one room 10x14, opposite the depot. Had a trunk brought over and was 'at home'. A Mormon lady, whose grandparents were Baptists, gave us our dinner and supper. I bought a candle, stuck it in a bottle (enough bottles lying around to pave a street) and had a light. Swept the floor, spread down my comforter, thanked God and retired. Thus passed the first night...Before Sunday I had canvassed the town for scholars. And gotten long benches for seats. Twenty-five were present for my S.S. Mr. Spencer had sent me some papers. How proud these little mentally starved children were at the rare sight of these beautiful papers. I have ordered singing books and shall beg money to pay for them. The children do enjoy singing. A gentleman from Omaha and his wife are to take charge of the music in my school....God helping me I will hold this fort. I'm trusting that the Lord will, in his own time and in his own way send needed supplies."[2]

Thus began the heroic saga of a woman who established the first faith mission for Baptists in Idaho. She called it Providence Mission. Knowing that the Home Mission Society had all on its hands that it could do with its limited means, she determined to use the little means she had to get upon the field, and then trust the Lord for the rest. Arriving in Ogden, she conferred with Rev. Dwight Spencer, the superintendent of Home Mission Activities in the Rocky Mountain area, and decided upon Eagle Rock. She reported her first

3. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 4, Number 9 (September, 1882) pp. 243-244.

4. Ibid., Volume 6, Number 8 (August, 1884) p. 220.

Sunday's work thus in a letter to Mr. Spencer:

> "Received supplies all right. My heart is too full and happy to wait till Monday to write you. I opened my Sunday School at 10 A. M. with 25 scholars. They were delighted with the papers. I have no doubt 50 will be present next Sunday. My room is so small I could not invite the old people today. But for next Sunday I have rented a larger room at $8 a month. Everybody is interested. The children are actually starving for instruction. Some of the older persons present told me that they had attended only two religious services in three years. Thus far I have found only one Baptist. Oh, what a harvest field is here! Stores are open, saloons too; in fact there is no Sabbath here. Now is the time to strike, who will occupy this field? I am only a non-commissioned officer in my Master's great army, but I have planted the Gospel standard and am going to hold the fort. But I want help. I think nothing of the privations I am enduring, my heart is so stirred to see young men and old men, daughters and mothers, living as if there was no God. How many will send of their means to build a Baptist chapel here? The building I have engaged is an old store room, 18x20, a miserable shanty, and sand drifts in like snow. This is an important point. I have canvassed the town and know what I say. Do urge the matter. I have taken for my motto in my work, 'All things are possible to him that believeth.' Have some more papers for next Sunday, and let me hear from you soon."[3]

For two long years Mrs. Mitchell kept up her Sunday School and a prayer meeting, taught her day-school for support, and by writing letters to friends, and circulating subscriptions, managed to collect enough to build and finish a meeting-house, and had it ready for dedication, November 2, 1884. She was frequently urged to pull down the Baptist flag and hoist "Union colors," but her reply was: "I started this as a Baptist mission, and a Baptist mission it will remain."[4]

5. Spriggs, W. T. S., A History of Baptists in Southern Idaho, p. 129.

6. The Pacific Baptist, June 1, 1888 as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 130.

7. Anonymous, Baptist History of South Idaho, p. 18.

Sometime in 1884 Rev. M. B. Lamb was sent there as a missionary to assist Mrs. Mitchell. He labored there for some five months at a salary of $150 with the result that a church of ten members was organized by Mr. Lamb and Mr. Spencer on August 30, 1884.[5] The church applied for membership in the First Idaho Association at Weiser on September 24, 1884, and was received. It reported then as received by letter 17, by baptism 8, with 55 enrolled in the Sunday School. This church invited the association to meet with them in 1885. Rev. C. H. Mattoon, who visited Eagle Rock in 1888, made this comment on the church:

> "The Eagle Rock church, organized in 1884, really commenced in June 1882 when Mrs. R. Mitchell arrived there from Illinois, commenced and kept up a S. S. and Prayer meeting unaided for two years, and at the organization she had two converts ready for baptism.....Within three months of the time of organization, she had a church house 24x45, with tower, bell, and baptistry, costing about $2600....no debt and ready for dedication. It was dedicated by Rev. D. Spencer preaching the sermon."[6]

For the rest of 1884 and perhaps some in 1885 the church had G. B. Bertley as missionary pastor. He labored there for 26 weeks and reported a Sunday School enrollment of 65 and collections totaling $30.15. In 1885, Rev. T. M. Stewart was chosen pastor and served the church for two years, holding services three Sundays out of four. Mr. Stewart came from Ottawa, Kansas, to Idaho in August, 1885. He graduated from Shurtleff College, Upper Alton, Illinois, in 1873, and from Newton Theological Institution at Newton Centre Massachusetts in 1876.[7] He taught school while pastoring

8. Minutes of Utah Association, 1887.

9. Minutes of Utah Association, 1888.

the Eagle Rock church, and after leaving the church began to practice law. The letter read to the First Idaho Association at Middle Valley reported, "Sunday School largely increased (from another source we learn that the enrollment had risen to 233) but there is a very unsettled feeling concerning the future of the town." Spriggs tells us that this feeling was the result of rumors that the railroad shops were to be moved to Pocatello. At this meeting the church asked to be dismissed to unite with the Utah Association.

In 1887 the pastor reported to the Utah Association, "Town badly crippled by R. R. company's movements....Members scattered, a few workers hold out, but with a nervous grasp. The outcome--there is a problem unsolved."[8] Rev. A. H. Lyons was appointed by the American Baptist Home Mission Society as missionary to Blackfoot and Eagle Rock in December, 1887. In 1888 he reported verbally to the Utah Association that the "membership was entirely removed from the field."[9] Nevertheless, Mr. Lyons hung on until the summer of 1890 as part-time pastor; other persons moved into Idaho Falls, and the church was able to reconstitute itself, after a successful revival by Mr. Lyons which resulted in ten baptisms.

When Lyons left Eagle Rock (by then known by its present name of Idaho Falls) Henry Van Engler succeeded him as pastor, also under appointment from the Home Mission Society. Mr. Van Engler was ordained by the church after his arrival. One of the first tasks that he set himself to was the reorganization of the church. Under his ministration

10. Ibid., 1891.

11. Fiftieth Anniversary Pamphlet, Blackfoot Baptist Church, 1884-1934.

the church meetings were well attended, the Sunday School flourished. Only three years after its discouraging report quoted above it was able to welcome the Utah Association within its walls in the following glowing terms:

> "We are glad to meet you in this, our eighth annual session. We extend to you a cordial welcome to our humble homes. Our city has changed her name since we last met. Eagle Rock has become Idaho Falls, but we still hold to Eagle Rock. Baptist churches stick to the Rock. During the year we have changed the appearnace of our meetinghouse by paint, paper, carpet and pulpit fixings. We want to keep up with the city. We are at peace among ourselves, and united on our pastor. Our meetings are well attended, and several have been baptized. Our Sunday School has kept up nicely. The infant and young people's classes deserve special mention. It does our souls good to see so many young men in our schools. Our school in the country has been doing well. We gave our pastor a vacation in August, and in his absence, gave his wife a donation."[10]

The church reported a membership of 38 to the Association at this time.

The Blackfoot Church, also, was an object of interest to Rev. Dwight Spencer. Before the coming of the railroad, the place had been of importance because it was on the Old Trail, Tim Goodwell's Cutoff, and the Stage Route to Helena, and was the center of much traffic and quite a history. Baptist history in the town can be said to have begun when Mrs. Susan E. Holbrook and family came to Blackfoot on November 5, 1883, from Illinois.[11] Blackfoot was then a wild western town of about 100 with seven saloons. The town was not without religious work, however. The Episcopalians carried on a small Sunday School, which was supported by all the Christian people in the vicinity.

12. Autobiography of Rev. Dwight Spencer, as quoted in 50th Anniversary Pamphlet, op. cit.

Mrs. Holbrook was not satisfied, though, with just a Sunday School. She decided that what the town needed was a church, and being a Baptist she naturally wanted a Baptist church. After calling around town she discovered that there were several Baptist families in the town, and so she wrote to Rev. Dwight Spencer, the Superintendent of Missions for Utah, Idaho and Montana, and arranged for him to come to town and discuss the proposed organization. Spencer described thus his first visit to the town:

> "The following day I returned back to Pocatello and then went North twenty miles to Blackfoot; where I had heard that there were several Baptist families living. This new town is built upon the border of the Reservation set apart by the Government as the future home of this tribe of Indians. Making inquiries I found the residence of one of the Baptist families, and was most kindly received and welcomed to their home.
>
> "Then getting the names of a few others, I appointed a meeting for the evening. Some ten or twelve came together and were very happy over the thought of having a Baptist Church in the immediate future. It was finally thought best to call a public meeting for the next evening. At the time appointed, I found a goodly number who had come together in a hall provided for such occasions. I laid the matter before them, stating that a good church edifice in a new town like theirs would be helpful to the place, not only because of the religious influence that would be exerted, but also because of the added value that it would give to every residence and all real estate. I assured them that the Home Mission Society would come to their aid with a gift of $400, and that it would also appoint a missionary to take charge of the work there in connection with a similar work in Pocatello. A committee then was appointed to take charge of the work of soliciting subscriptions, and I told them that I would come again in a few weeks."[12]

This visit by Spencer convinced him that there were real possibilities for developing a Baptist work here, and so

13. Minutes of First Idaho Association, 1885.

while he was encouraging the work at Eagle Rock with the assistance of Mrs. Mitchell and Mr. Lamb, he pushed the work at Blackfoot also. He apparently changed his mind about entering the Pocatello field and arranged to combine the Eagle Rock and Blackfoot fields under one pastorate.

The Blackfoot church was organized by Rev. M. T. Lamb on September 19, 1884, with six members on the charter member roll, and was admitted to the First Association at Weiser on September 24, 1884. That year Mrs. Susie Holbrook was appointed on the committee to raise money in the church for the Home Mission Board of the Association. The next year the church reported the death of Brother Harry Bair "a few weeks ago" who "a little more than a year ago became one of the constituent members of the Baptist church organized at that time....Bro. Bair was almost without fault."[13] The letter for that year also had this to say: "Monthly services, the pastor at Eagle Rock officiating. Hope to build soon. Join with the Methodists in S. S. and Prayer meeting." In 1885 Rev. M. Bartlett, a new arrival, was preaching for the church once a month. In October of that year the church withdrew from the Union Sunday School and organized a Sunday School of its own. The church and Sunday School were held in a small school house where Central School now stands. In July, 1886, Rev. T. M. Stewart, under appointment from the American Baptist Home Mission Society, became part-time pastor, living in and serving the Eagle Rock church until

14. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 7, Number 7 (July, 1886) p. 190.

15. Autobiography of Dwight Spencer, op. cit.

October, 1887, when Rev. A. H. Lyons came west to succeed him at Eagle Rock and Blackfoot. The church withdrew from the First Association with Eagle Rock in 1886 to unite with the Utah Association. Under the guidance of Rev. T. M. Stewart the church had launched upon a building program, and at the First Association meeting at Middle Valley had reported that it was "building a brick edifice large enough for present needs." Part of the money for this building was raised through the help of Rev. Dwight Spencer:

> "Last winter many of our friends East gave money to help him build chapels, and he has made good use of the money this summer in erecting houses of worship.....At Dillon, Montana, and Blackfoot, Idaho, new houses of worship are going up, thanks to those kind friends who answered his appeal last year...."[14]

The church was dedicated February 29, 1887. Of the dedication, Mr. Spencer in his autobiography says:

> "....What expectancy is everywhere manifested; the first Church in all that vast region of unbroken prairie....Rev. F. E. Bostwick, Sup't of Sunday School Missions for Montana and Dakota, preached the Dedicatory Sermon (Text: Isaiah 52:9) and Rev. Stewart gave the Dedicatory prayer. The financial statement, at this time, shows the church entirely paid for with the exception of $500.00 loaned by the Baptist Home Mission Society....."[15]

The church was a 28x48 brick building seating 300. Its letter to the Utah Association, October 5, 1887, was as follows:

> "Blackfoot: Reports a spirit of harmony and fellowship. One member received by letter and one by baptism. Sunday School well attended. Preaching fairly sustained. New house of worship dedicated February 29. For information and possible encouragement of other fields append

16. Minutes of Utah Association, 1887.

17. Minutes of Utah Association, 1888.

18. The Idaho News, Volume 2, Number 13 (September 8, 1888) p. 1.

19. Ibid., Volume 2, Number 17 (October 6, 1888) p. 1.

20. Ibid., Volume 2, Number 18 (October 13, 1888) p. 1.

> statements of expense and manner of meeting it. Cost of church building, $2434.54; Home Mission Society, loaned, $500; donated $500; parties outside of Blackfoot donated $164.50; donations & entertainments at Blackfoot realized $998.15; Ladies Aid Society assumed $100; a member of the church assumed to raise $200. Invites Association to meet with us next year."[16]

In February, 1888, the church held a series of special meetings with good results. November 1, 1888, Rev. A. H. Lyons became the first resident pastor, living in what is known as the Dolan home. It reported to the association that "a new bell has been placed in the tower and other improvements placed on the church property. The Sunday School and Ladies Aid well sustained."[17]

In 1887 the Idaho News began publication at Blackfoot. The first year's files are missing, but the files for the second year contain several interesting items concerning the Blackfoot church. On September 8, 1888, the paper carried this news note:

> "Services were somewhat disarranged on last Sunday. Rev. Lyons was to preach in Blackfoot Sunday evening and Rev. Stull at Pocatello; the freight being 8 hours late spoiled the program, and Rev. Mrs. Lyons remained in Eagle Rock and Mrs. Sull in Blackfoot."[18]

The issue for October 6th contains a notice of the Utah Association meeting "which will be held in the Baptist Church of this place beginning at 10 A.M., Wednesday, October 10th." [19] The next week's edition stated that "The number of visiting brethren to the Association was smaller than was expected."[20] The paper on the following week commented on the fact that "The Baptist church has lately been enclosed

21. Ibid., Volume 2, Number 19 (October 20, 1888) p. 1.

with a neat fence, and next spring the yard will be sown in lawn grass."[21] Comments are also made on the programs given for Children's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

About this time Stewart decided to leave the ministry and went to Blackfoot to reside, practicing law there for many years. A. H. Lyons continued as pastor of the church until the fall of 1891 when he moved to Weiser. The church was without a regular pastor until 1893 when S. W. Gage settled there, serving for two years.

Pocatello, Idaho, also had a great history before the railroad or the Baptists came. In 1862, Pokatello massacred a California train near the City of Rocks in Cassia County, for which General P. E. Conner of Fort Douglass, Utah, surrounded the band's winter camp on Bear River on January 29, 1863, and almost annihilated the entire band--267 Indians fought and only 16 escaped. In 1864, Ben Halliday opened his stage route and located a station which he named Pocatello. The placed developed into the present town. Although the Utah and Northern Railroad passed through the town in 1877, the presence of a railroad did not have any immediate effect upon the religious life of the town as far as Baptists were concerned. Even then the Union Pacific was was talking of building a branch line through to the Pacific Northwest, which they proposed to call the Oregon Short Line.

> "Location maps for the O.S.L. proper were filed in 1879. After many difficulties the track reached the Idaho line from Granger, Wyoming on June 16, 1882. The construction

22. Brosnan, op. cit., p. 290.

23. The Pacific Baptist (November 1, 1887) as found in Book of Clippings, p. 23.

24. Howard, Minnie F., Early Life and Times of the First Congregational Church of Pocatello, 1928, p. 9.

> crews continued to work their way westward until Huntington, Oregon was reached in 1884. On January 1, 1885 the first through passenger train from Omaha to Portland passed through the state."[22]

The Utah and Northern and the Oregon Short Line intersected at Pocatello, and it was not long before the former was purchased by the latter and the shops for both roads centered at Pocatello. However, even the presence of two railroads did not produce immediate results. The Editor of the Pacific Baptist visited there in 1887, and although he described the town as it then was quite in detail, he made no mention of any religious work.[23] Rev. W. S. Hawkes, Superintendent of the Utah-Idaho Mission field for the Congregational church for many years, apparently began the first work in the town. Concerning his first efforts at Pocatello he wrote:

> "On my way to Butte I stopped at Pocatello and met a Mrs. Bennett and a Miss Van Wormes, a school teacher and called on quite a number of Christian people of various denominations who told me if I would send a minister and start a church they would all go into it and stay with it until the place was large enough for another church. Among them were Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians; whether any original Congregationalists I do not recall. Later a church was organized (July 8, 1888) and some of the families stayed with us until other churches came and some liked us so well that they never left our church."[24]

After visiting the people, Hawkes held a preaching service in the school house that evening, February 24, 1888. So far as we know, this was the first religious service held in the town.

25. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 10, Number 8 (August, 1888), pp. 205, 206.

26. Book of Clippings, p. 25.

27. The Sunday Tribune-Journal, Volume 38, Number 38 (April 30, 1939) p. 9.

But if the Congregationalists were the first to enter the town, Baptists were not far behind. In May, 1888, Rev. Dwight Spencer was in the town for a few hours changing trains, and had this to say concerning his visit:

> "...A town of 300 and no church, and only occasional preaching. Sister Mitchell, who began the work at Eagle Rock, is here, trying to interest the people in a Sunday School."[25]

Apparently Mrs. Mitchell did find enough interested persons to warrant a Baptist Sunday School, for the Sunday School Superintendent at Eagle Rock, Dr. S. R. Wagoner, whose profession as a dentist took him statedly to Pocatello, organized a Sunday School and sustained it until he moved his business to Ogden, Utah.[26] We wonder if Dr. Wagoner's move to Ogden where Dwight Spencer had his headquarters had anything to do with hastening the day when Baptists would occupy this important field.

However, Frank Barnett, who succeeded Dwight Spencer as general missionary for this territory had the honor of bringing the work at Pocatello to a head. He organized a Baptist church with 12 charter members on November 8, 1891,[27] and about the same time transferred Miss.A. Oberg to Pocatello from Ogden. She organized the Sunday School, conducted the prayer meetings and did calling for the first few months. Tidings, the organ of the Woman's Baptist Home Mission Society, reported her work thus in March, 1892:

> "Miss A. Oberg writes of some encouragement in her work at Pocatello, Idaho. Her Industrial School is growing so rapidly that she says she will not be able to take in any

28. Tidings of Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society, Volume 11, Number 7 (March, 1892) p. 13.

29. Book of Clippings, p. 29.

30. Sunday Tribune-Journal, Volume 38, Number 38 (April 30, 1939), p. 9.

> more until the Baptists secure a place of their own. The Sunday School is also growing, and she speaks of four consecrated teachers, who help her in this work, and rejoices in having secured two excellent singers to lead the music in the Sunday School, thus adding to its attractiveness. She speaks of having found a number of Baptists in her visiting, and thinks if a minister can be secured, quite a little company can be gathered. She reports the organization of a missionary society, which she hopes will be helpful in carrying forward the work of the Lord in Pocatello. A class has also been started for the practice of music and is held in the house of a gentleman who leads the singing in the Sunday School. The weekly prayer meeting, which is held from house to house, is well attended. Miss Oberg asks especially that prayer be made for her that she may have help and strength for the work laid upon her and for the blessing of the Lord upon the people of Pocatello."[28]

Work was begun on the church building in the spring of 1892, and the Pacific Baptist reports that "their house will probably be completed by August 1st, and will cost $2300 or more. Rev. J. G. Pulliam is supplying them with preaching for three months."[29] On July 14, 1892, Miss Oberg was married and moved back to Ogden, so apparently Pulliam was brought in to keep an eye on things for the Baptists until another resident worker could be secured. Rev. A. H. Lyons took charge of the church in November, 1892,[30] and under his supervision a parsonage was erected. A clipping preserved for us at Baptist State Headquarters from the year 1893 has this to say:

> "These are some observations of a pilgrim on his way to Denver. He finds: In the midst of an Indian reservation and the mountains stands this beautiful city of 3500 people. Extensive car shops and many railroads furnish

31. Book of Clippings, p. 31.

32. Spriggs, op. cit., p. 140.

> revenue. Its business blocks are fine. The dwellings quite small; the school building is a beauty. Its Baptist church and parsonage is the best church property in town and the bishop thereof, Rev. A. H. Lyon, with his heroic wife and less than twenty members are doing a grand work."[31]

The rest of the story of the work at Pocatello more properly belongs in a later chapter, so we must leave it to follow the course of the Oregon Short Line westward across the State.

The one great object of pushing the road across Idaho at that time was to take advantage of the business being brought into the State by the gold rush into the Wood River country. At first the traffic into Wood River was handled by the stage and freighters over the Goose Creek line from Kelton, Utah, on the Central Pacific. But the Union Pacific wanted the business for itself, and so began feverish construction of the Oregon Short Line westward from Pocatello in 1882. By May, 1882, it had two thousand men at work on the road near American Falls. By June the surveyors had stakes up almost to Ketchum. They were building over rough country, though, and it was not until January, 1883, that the crew approached Shoshone. In February work was begun on the Wood River, and the last spike driven on this branch at 10:30 on May 12, 1883.

At least one Baptist got into Shoshone (then known as Naples) ahead of the railroad. He was Robert McMahon, who landed in the town on October 22, 1882, and saw the first train pull in on February 2, 1883.[32] He was a resi-

33. The Idaho Statesman, as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 166.

dent of the town for the remainder of his life, running a store in the days when the writer knew him, and was a charter member of the Shoshone church. He was also the brother-in-law of W. H. Bowler whose work in Idaho as a Baptist missionary will require a chapter of this thesis to relate. The story of the Shoshone church will be told in that chapter.

However, work in the Wood River country by Baptists did begin quite some time before Bowler arrived on the scene, and so we will detour from the main-line across the State long enough to tell that story.

Rev. J. B. Foster, the man who organized the church at Boise, left Boise City about the middle of April, 1880, for the Wood River country "to seek his fortune in the new Eldorado" along with thousands of other men. He had been to this country two years before on a campaign against the Indians. He reports on Bellevue, the town in this country with which we are primarily concerned as follows:

> "The place is 7 miles from the old crossing on Wood River. Now 125 lots recorded.. ...13 houses completed and occupied....Topance's Stage arrives from Blackfoot three times a week....Two short years ago this was a waste howling wilderness....Your correspondent has within the last three days passed over a number of places where less than two years ago, in company with his fellow scouts, each hill-top was approached cautiously in anticipation of a warm reception at the hands of a hidden foe... Prospecting is still the rage here. There seems to be a mineral belt to the West of this stream, extending from some miles below this point, through Warm Spring District, Galena City, Sawtooth and Gold districts to Bonanza....This little town of Bellevue will doubtless make a lively little camp."[33]

In May or June, 1881, Rev. Dwight Spencer visited the Wood River and the account of his visit is so full of interesting reading that parts of it are quoted here:

> "Well, after 90 miles by rail and 150 by stage we reached this famous mining camp... ..We were 33 hours in the stage coach, being shaken up with sundry valises, express packages and mail bags! Think of being so sleepy that your eyes will not stay open, and then just as you fall into a comfortable doze, of being thrown from your seat so that your head scrapes the top of the coach, and you find yourself in the lap of a fellow passenger....Of being called now to help the horses up a steep pitch, and now to repair a broken bridge, etc....
>
> "The Wood River country....is filling very rapidly. Bellevue, the first place settled, has already 1000 inhabitants. And Hailey with a growth of only two months numbers 500. Both are bustling towns, swarming with prospectors and miners. The mountain sides are literally honey-combed in some places, and every canyon and ravine sends up a smoke from a miner's camp.... Good prospects sell from $500 to $5000....Within a radius of 7 miles from Hailey are at least 10,000 people, and for all this busy, delving throng, there is neither church nor school house....
>
> "I preached Sunday afternoon at Hailey in a lodging tent which a lady kindly loaned for the occasion, and in the evening at Bellevue in an unfinished store. The attention in both places was good, though in Bellevue, while preaching, I could hear the musicians of three gambling saloons....
>
> "A live man--a man who loves souls--should be sent upon the field at once. There are a few Baptists in both places; and churches ought to be immediately organized. I secured lots in Hailey, and have promise of others, in Bellevue, upon the payment of a small sum, and in order to hold them, it is important that meeting houses be at once commenced. The field is unoccupied now, and the denomination that puts up the house of worship will be able to hold....They are anxious to have churches built....I met an old man at Hailey who had been brought up in a family of a Baptist deacon in Massachusetts. I hope this

34. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 3, Number 8 (August, 1881) pp. 163, 164.

35. The Wood River Times, Volume 1, Number 1 (May 20, 1882) p. 1.

36. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 18, Number 14 (August 14, 1881), p. 3.

matter will not be allowed to rest...let some warm hearted missionary go forth at once."[34]

But unfortunately for Baptists, the good advice of Spencer was not heeded, and others were allowed to come in and preempt the field after the good start which he had made. The Episcopalians under Bishop Tuttle of Boise, and the Presbyterians under Rev. E. Pratt, and the Catholics under Father Nattini, all began formal work in the valley in 1883. It took men of courage to come into a situation like that and start Christian work as the following interesting item from the first edition of the Wood River Times would indicate:

> "The Rev. Pratt, a Presbyterian missionary from New York, arrived in Hailey a few days ago. As soon as his arrival was known some of the boys appointed a Committee to wait upon him and request him to leave.....They stated their conviction that if a church were started here, it would seriously retard the growth of the town, if not kill it altogether. But Pratt said that he would gladly oblige the boys but he had been sent here by his church to perform what he considered a sacred duty....and would remain until he had performed that duty. They offered him a purse of $500 if he would leave. Half an hour later Mr. Riley waited upon him to tender a church lot. But Mr. Pratt refused saying that he proposed to pay his way. Then they left off."[35]

Despite these handicaps, the Presbyterians and Episcopalians soon had several church buildings in the valley. Our friend, J. B. Foster, apparently was too busy prospecting to carry on the work. He got into a fight during this time and was shot, and reported killed to the Statesman who then published his obituary, but the next week apologized stating that they had learned that he was still very much alive.[36]

37. Minutes of First Association, 1886.

The Methodists came into the valley with formal work in 1883, and soon had churches at Hailey and Bellevue.

Foster settled in Gimlet, where he had a toll gate for a while, staked out some valuable claims, and finally ended up selling mining stock in the midwest. He came back to the Wood River country in the spring of 1884, and we lose track of him for a while. However, he must have returned to his first love, the ministry, within a year or so, for he organized a church with twelve members at Bellevue on March 6, 1886. When the First Idaho Association met in Middle Valley in the fall of that year the moderator reported the organization of the church and "the clerk was instructed to communicate with the new church at Bellevue and invite them to represent themselves by letter and delegates at our next meeting."[37] However, the members of the church were poor, and owing to the distance and the expense the church did not come into the association the next year, though they sent a letter asking admittance. Since they were not represented by delegates their application was not approved.

Foster was faithful and an earnest worker and had occasional accessions. In August,1887, help was requested from the American Baptist Home Mission Society in building a meeting house, but was not obtained. In February, 1888, Foster held a protracted meeting which resulted in thirteen accessions, twelve by baptism. In May, 1888, Rev. Dwight Spencer visited the field again and described the experience thus:

38. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 10, Number 8 (August, 1888), pp. 205, 206.

39. The Pacific Baptist (June 1, 1888) as quoted by Spriggs, op., cit., p. 181.

> "...Rev. J. B. Foster is pastor, and the difficulties under which he labors would discourage any ordinary man. The church worships in a log-house 13x24 with only one window and seats made of rough boards. Preached three evenings, with house crowded and some leaving for want of room. Sunday morning the people flocked in from the country, and the meeting was very solemn. After the sermon three were baptized. Then the Sunday-School, completely filling the house, and the pastor told me they could have twice the number if they had the room.
>
> "In the evening the house was full again, and after the sermon we observed the Lord's Supper; then talked with the brethren about building a house. All eager to have the work begun, and about $300 subscribed. The next day visited and made the subscription up to $500 and promised $500 from the Home Mission Society. Who will help this feeble band? Every dollar they have given means a sacrifice. Some of the sisters support their families by taking in washing, and the brethren work in the mines, or in the mountains cutting wood; I have seldom visited a more devoted group."[38]

About the same time Rev. C. H. Matoon representing the Pacific Baptist visited there, and wrote among other things these observations about the church:

> "...Bro. Foster has the confidance of the entire community, and is liberally giving himself and all he has to the work....Bro. Foster has preached two years with no salary and as he has no use of his right arm, and is poor, this is a heavy tax on him. His church has kept up a regular weekly prayer meeting for two years without missing once, and they have a live S.S. averaging 60 scholars....They talk of establishing two mission stations for their pastor; one at Ketchum about 18 miles distant where are about a dozen Baptists; and another at Camas Prairie, about thirty miles distant with perhaps half a dozen Baptists."[39]

At the First Association meeting at Caldwell, September 21, 1888, the Bellevue Church was received into the Association. The report on the state of the churches given at this Association spoke of the "Church at Bellevue which

40. Minutes of First Association, 1888, p. 10.

41. Book of Clippings, p. 22.

42. Rev. J. B. Foster as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 183.

is in a glowingly exultant condition."[40] A digest of their letter to the Association read: "Rev. J. B. Foster pastor. Had a precious revival last winter....Have a good house to worship in." They also reported a licentiate, W. R. Gladden.

A clipping marked January, 1889, on file at Baptist State Headquarters concerning Bellevue has this to say:

> "At Bellevue, Idaho, the little church is striving to erect a house of worship. Rev. J. B. Foster, the Missionary pastor, writes for aid and says: 'I am the only Baptist minister in this country which has an area of 15,000 sq. miles and a population of 20,000. Our people have done all they can do. And I never saw people do better, when we take into account their poverty. There is a promise of good work being done here, if we can get a house. There is no house of worship of any kind in the town...The H. M. Society holds the deed to the church lot, and so there is no danger that money given for the chapel will be lost!"[41]

Despite the poverty of the members, none of whom was worth more than $500, with the help of the Home Mission Society the long desired church was at last built, and with almost immediate results. Foster wrote in May, 1889:

> "Our congregations are increasing and there is a marked improvement in our S.S. I also notice a marked improvement in the class of persons who attend our services since we began to use our new house. We had been paying $60 a year for a small log house in which to worship. With a gift of $500 and a small loan, the church was enabled to complete a handsome house of worship, and to enter at once upon a career of usefulness in this thriving town, when, without aid from us, they would still have been renting the little log house, with but small prospect of success."[42]

In July, 1889, Foster was compelled to resign on account of poor health and he moved over into Oregon, near Pendleton to serve the churches at Weston and Adams. The

43. Minutes of First Idaho Association, 1889.

44. Anonymous, op. cit., p. 22.

45. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 13, Number 6 (June, 1891) p. 154.

reader will recall that when Foster first came to Idaho, he came from the Weston church. When the First Association met at Weiser, September 19-21, 1889, Bellevue sent no delegates, but was reported by A. J. Hash. The digest of their letter indicated discouragement because of lack of pastor. The church reported "A S. S. of 30 with Mrs. M. A. Miller, Supt. The church reports 31 members in 1888 and 21 this year, 1889. Mrs. Jenny M. Gladden, Clerk."[43]

The church had no pastor until the fall of 1890 when Rev. J. O. Burroughs took over the field under appointment from the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Almost at once an era of prosperity dawned for the church. Protracted meetings were held which produced 20 additions; 18 by baptism. An excerpt from a letter written by a member of the church shows how Burroughs was regarded: "Our church is doing well. Our pastor is all that we could ask for. He has a warm place in the hearts of every man, woman and child in Bellevue. We hardly have seating room on Sunday evenings."[44] Nor did Pastor Burroughs fail to use this influence for good, as this news item indicates:

> "Rev. J. O. Burroughs of Bellevue, is determined to not only preach the Gospel, but to also work for the betterment in every way of his field. He has just secured the written agreement of all the merchants and other business men of Bellevue to close up their stores on Sunday, and this day is now more like what the Master intended it should be in this Idaho town. Good reports continue to come about this church and their working pastor, Brother Burroughs."[45]

46. The Beacon (August 1, 1885)

However, at the First Idaho Association in 1891, Burroughs was chosen as the District Missionary for the State, and he closed his labors at Bellevue on October 25, 1891. Needless to say, this was a severe trial to the church, but it resolutely refused to die. After this, the history of the Bellevue church is rather hazy until Rev. W. H. Bowler arrived on the scene in February, 1894. We do know that Rev. W. E. Sawyer, who was pastor at Idaho Falls for a little less than a year, and ordained by that church on September 28, 1892, was pastor at Bellevue after he had left Idaho Falls because of ill health on July 29, 1893. The story of the Bellevue church will be continued in the chapter on W. H. Bowler's work.

But now to return to the main-line, and the effect which its building had upon Baptist churches in Southwestern Idaho. We have already noticed how Boise, though not on the main-line found itself prospering because of the influx of people which the railroad had brought into the State. In the four years that Rev. L. L. Shearer was there (1881-1885) membership increased from 12 to 68, the church was cleared of debt, and a flourishing Sunday School maintained.[46] But because Boise was not on the main-line, the influence of the railroad was not nearly as pronounced as at other places. We may look at Morrow's church down in Dixie, for an example.

The coming of the railroad to the lower Boise Valley created quite a stir among the members of the New Hope Church. We have already seen enough of Rev. B. F. Morrow to realize that he was not a man to ignore opportunity's knock, and so

47. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume V, Number 12 (December, 1883) p. 265.

48. Minutes, First Idaho Association, 1883.

when the railroad announced that a townsite would be laid out within a few miles of where the New Hope church was meeting, we are not surprised to learn that the New Hope church was ready and willing to meet the challenge which the new situation provided. But out of all fairness to the General Missionary, Rev. Dwight Spencer, we must say that he was on hand from the beginning, giving the church all the support he could in meeting the new opportunity thus presented. In an article titled, "Help for Idaho," which he wrote for the Home Mission Monthly, he called attention to the needs presented by the situation thus:

> "...Near Caldwell, the present terminus of the Oregon Short Line, we have a little church holding services in a school house. Lots are offered us in the town if we will build. Fifteen hundred dollars will build a house, and eight hundred dollars can be raised on the field. Who will give the seven hundred? Speak quickly, for these towns will not wait. Caldwell is only ten days old and already it has forty houses."[47]

At the meeting of the First Idaho Association in Boise on October 4, 1883, Rev. J. Earnhart, missionary for the Association spoke of work in the new town of Caldwell. The report of the Committee on Associational Work voted that they "Recommend to the Home Mission Society an appropriation of $500 for Caldwell."[48] The New Hope Church was represented at this session of the Association by Morrow, Potts, Orr and Maggie Potts, and we have reason to believe that Morrow was instrumental in enlisting the Association's influence in behalf of help for the Caldwell church building. At any rate, at its next monthly meeting on November

49. Minutes of New Hope Church, p. 94.

50. Ibid., p. 95.

51. The Beacon (April 1, 1884)

52. Minutes of New Hope Church, p. 96.

53. Ibid., p. 97.

3, 1883, "on motion of Bro. Wm. Orr, Rev's. J. Earnhart and B. F. Morrow and Bro. M. Potts were appointed a committee to solicit aid in building a Baptist Church House in the Town of Caldwell."[49] Apparently the drive for funds met with success, for three months later the church "on motion elected five trustees to build the church in Caldwell; vix., Elder B. F. Morrow, M. Potts, A. R. T. Newland, Samuel Holt, Dr. C. E. Lee."[50] In March, R. L. Morrow, clerk of the church sent the following news item to the Beacon:

> "This is a young town of about 600..... A large canal is being brought to the town. The Town Co. has donated a plot of ground 50x120 to the Baptists here. We are now erecting a church 24x36 ft., the work being pushed rapidly. Expect to dedicate about the first of May. We have asked a donation of $500 from the Church Edifice Fund. This will enable us to dedicate free from debt.....The business men of this town have been very liberal towards this enterprise, particularly Messrs. R. E. Strahorn and H. C. Wallace."[51]

At the monthly business meeting in April, the New Hope Church voted "that our House in Caldwell be finished according to specifications,"[52] and a month later the church "elected a committee of three to prepare a programme for the dedication of our house in Caldwell."[53] B. F. Morrow, A. R. T. Newland and R. L. Morrow were thus elected. The program of dedication appeared in the Statesman for June 14, 1884, as follows:

> "The New Baptist Church which has just been completed will be dedicated the 5th Sunday in June, the 29th, inst. Program: Singing by Choir; Invocation by Rev. J. Earnhart, Missionary of the First Association; Hymn; Reading of Scripture by Rev. L. L. Shearer; Prayer by Rev. D. P. Maryatt (Weiser); Dedicatory Sermon by Rev. Dwight Spencer; Dedicatory

54. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 20, Number 143 (June 14, 1884.)

55. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 6, Number 8 (August, 1884) p. 200.

Prayer by Rev. A. F. Willard (Providence, R. I.) Benediction by Rev. S. W. Applegate (Mann's Creek). Evening Program: Scripture by C. S. McConnell, S. S. Supt.; Prayer, D. P. Maryatt; Addresses, Rev. Earnhart, Rev. Willard, Rev. Spencer, Rev. Shearer; Benediction by Rev. B. F. Morrow, Pastor. Signed, Rev. B. F. Morrow, A. R. T. Newland, R. L. Morrow, Committee."54

Dwight Spencer reported the Dedication in the Home Mission Monthly. His write-up on the day's events is as follows:

"This little church, fully alive to the responsibility thrown upon them, determined to arise and build, and 8 months after the town was laid out a beautiful Baptist church was completed. This church was dedicated Sunday, June 29th, the writer preaching the sermon. It was an occasion of great rejoicing for the little flock in Caldwell. Most of the members had not been inside a church since leaving the states, and with some of the children this was the only church they had ever seen. Not only was the house full of anxious hearers, but many stood about the doors and windows, listening to the word.

"After the sermon, it was found that $1,300 was needed to free the building from debt. Immediately 3 brethren came forward and became responsible for $500; then to the joy of all, it was stated that the Home Mission Society had sent on a gift of $500, which left only $300 to be provided for. Then a brother in the congregation threw a $20 gold-piece up to the pulpit, smaller pieces followed, and in a few minutes the whole sum was raised. The house is a beautiful frame building, with a tower and spire. The windows are of stained and enameled glass; the interior is neatly papered; and a superior Estey organ stands near the pulpit. The entire cost has been nearly $2,500, and the church is entitled to great credit for the business-like manner in which they carried the enterprise through. And when it is remembered that this is the only church on the Oregon Short Line road, a distance of more than 300 miles, I think no one will say that this part of the country has too many churches."55

Mr. Morrow continued as pastor of the church for its first year in its new home. In March, Rev. A. B. Mc-

56. Anonymous, op. cit, p.10.

57. Book of Clippings, op. cit., p. 11.

Pherson came and helped Morrow in meetings. In June, 1885, Pastor Morrow resigned after serving the church for eight and one-fourth years, since its organization on March 4, 1876. Rev. A. B. McPherson was then chosen pastor, preaching two Sundays of each month at Caldwell, and at Payette and Riverside the rest of the time. A "Union Sunday-School under Baptist management" was organized and kept going.

In 1886 efforts were made to ordain Mrs. J. C. Smith to the ministry, but a large Council, with Rev. Dwight Spencer as Moderator recommended "that she labor as she has opportunity without being ordained."[56] That her work was effective is vouched for by the following quotation taken the book of clippings:

> "This association is peculiarly fortunate in Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Smith whose home is in Caldwell. Mrs. Smith is able and successful in evangelistic work and has been so employed. ...Herself and her husband with their own conveyance have made a tour of the great region covered by the association, extending their fruitful labors into the adjoining state of Oregon. They have held eleven revival meetings in as many different places in the association and which have resulted in the conversion of not less than forty souls. The associational board has wisely engaged Sister Smith for the same work the coming year. She is an excellent preacher. She occupied the Baptist pulpit at Boise on the Sabbath morning during the association, with much acceptance by the people. Both herself and husband are well spoken of in all the churches."[57]

The Smiths had united with the Baptist church in 1886, coming from the New Lights. In June, 1887, by the advice of a large Council, Rev. A. B. McPherson was excluded for cause of drunkenness and profanity, and his credentials called in.

58. Book of Clippings, op. cit., pp. 12, 13.

In August, Rev. George Newman, then pastor at Boise, accepted the call of the church.

Reporting the results of his first nine month's work on the field, Pastor Newman wrote in April, 1888:

> "There has been no addition yet by baptism, but some good Christians who had long held back have identified themselves with the church. People tell me there has in many respects been improvement and good done spiritually.
>
> "Last fall we built a sidewalk to the church which aside from labor cost $95. I secured a donation of fifty hymn books from a friend in New York City. We also made some little improvements inside our church edifice.
>
> "We are going to purchase a bell this spring; about half the necessary amount is already raised. Two societies of little girls organized themselves with the purpose of helping our work in some way. A bell seemed to be about the first thing needed. They made fancy work, etc, and sold the articles and saved money for the bell. About a week ago the girls gave a literary and musical entertainment at the close of which ice cream and cake was served. From the refreshments alone they cleared $61. All the exercises were conducted by the girls and were indeed excellent. The two societies--"Pansies" and "Daisies" have raised about $80 for the bell.
>
> "There is some indication that we will soon be able to put in a baptistry, dressing rooms, etc. this summer. This improvement will cost about $200 and may be given by a friend in New York City. Making some needed improvements seems about all we can do for the present. On the whole, I feel encouraged, concerning the work here. A better understanding of the work and spirit of a Christian is the great need here and in all our churches."[58]

In 1889 Newman was forced to resign because of ill health and for several months the church had no preaching except an occasional sermon by Rev. Mr. Lydston.

In 1890, Rev. I. S. Hicks was chosen as pastor, his support being shared by the church and the American Baptist

59. Paper read at 66th Anniversary by Mrs. A. E. Gipson.

Home Mission Society. Caldwell was a difficult field to serve, principally because of the peculiar situation in which the church found itself at first. As it was the only church in Caldwell, people of all denominations gathered and worshipped in it. But with the growth of the town, the other denominations began organzing their own churches. The Presbyterians were the first to leave, taking with them many of the Methodists. The members of the Christian Church stayed the longest. Mrs. A. E. Gipson, grandmother of the writer and the oldest living member of the Caldwell church at this writing, commenting on this situation at the 66th Anniversary of the church said:

> "They (the Christians) organized their own church in 1892 and when they left us, taking with them at least half of the Sunday School scholars, it was a time of deep discouragement to the weakened Baptist church."59

These continued departures from the church account for the reason why its membership was not as large after six years in the town of Caldwell as it was before it moved from Dixie. Pastor Hicks, reviewing his three years' work at Caldwell wrote:

> "I am glad to say that the 'Sun of Righteousness' is still shining on Caldwell. We enjoyed a precious revival this winter, and some very valuable accessions to the church were the result. Less than three years ago, I began my labor here with a membership of 10. Now we number 54, notwithstanding great loss by death, removal and exclusion. This church at the end of the present quarter (June 1) is very likely to be without a pastor, (the present one feeling he will have to leave on account of the poor health of his family), and

60. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 15, Number 4 (April, 1893, p. 106.

61. Anonymous, op. cit, p. 14.

62. Minutes, First Idaho Association, 1885.

> any consecrated brother who things of coming West might do worse than to visit Caldwell with the pastorate in view."60

With the story of Mr. Hicks' work we close the account of the Caldwell church for the time being, and are now ready to consider briefly the history of still another church whose life was determined by the railroad, the church at Riverside.

Riverside was one of the oldest settled points in Southwestern Idaho, having been for a great many years a Post Office. It was there that the second Old Fort Boise stood. The first gold seekers in this part of Idaho came into the State at this point. It was located at the mouth of the Boise River, and seems to have lived a very orderly life until the coming of the railroad skyrocketed it into brief fame and notoriety. Besides the Post Office it boasted a hotel and store before the coming of the railroad. A bridge across the Snake River had to be built for the railroad at this point, and the building produced the usual business boom, and created a boom town known as St. Paul on the flats just below the bench on which the older settlement of Riverside was located. A church was organized at Riverside on December 30, 1893, by Rev. J. Earnhart, Rev. B. F. Morrow and Rev. S. W. Applegate.[61] The church came into the First Idaho Association in 1884,[62] Rev. J. Earnhart, the associational missionary serving it as part-time pastor. In 1885, Rev. A. B. McPherson shared his time with this church and continued as part-time pastor until he was excluded. The church was poor and could pay her pastor but

63. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 20, Number 14 (August 13, 1883) p. 2.

little; $25 for his year's services. Yet in 1886 it was holding its own and praying for a revival. However, many people who had moved into the area when the bridge was built left at the completion of the work, the boom collapsed, and the result was disastrous for the church at Riverside. In 1888, owing to removals and other causes, it had but four members left, no preaching except by some passing missionary or minister. It was finally dropped from the minutes of the Association in 1890.

We now follow the railroad as it builds into the Payette and Weiser valley country. Our readers will remember that we have already told quite in detail the story of the Bluff Station church which was located on the Payette about six or seven miles above the juncture of the river with the Snake River. There was quite a settlement of people at this point. However, when the railroad came to this part of the State, it missed the old settlement, and as was to be expected, a new town sprang up on the railroad at the point closest to the old settlement. This new town was at first called Boomerang. Articles in the Statesman reports on the town thus:

> "Passing down the Payette, we caught a glimpse of a new town called Boomerang...some half a dozen newly erected board houses. The town is situated on the O. S. L. near the mouth of the Payette River"[63]

> "Crossing Payette River at the R. R. ford, we were soon upon the streets of Payette City, or as some evil-minded persons would call it, Boomerang. This is really a brand new town... one street laid off, in center of which is

64. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 20, Number 24 (September 18, 1833) p. 3.

65. Minutes, First Idaho Association, 1885, p. 11.

66. Anonymous, op. cit., p. 8.

> a good well.....Have only 5 saloons....a hotel, a grocery store, blacksmith shop and feed stable....Farmers are throwing dirt pretty lively in the construction of a canal to convey water from the Payette at Bluff Ferry."[64]

At the Association meeting held at Weiser in 1884, it was reported that this new town was without preaching of any sort, but apparently this state of affairs was soon remedied, for the Home Mission Board in its report delivered at the Association the next year said: "At the new town of Payette, Bro. MacPherson has been holding up the standard of the cross."[65]

This new town of Payette, or "Boomerang" as it was popularly known at first, did indeed boomerang against Baptist work in that part of the country as it then existed. Our readers will recall that way back in 1873, Rev. B. F. Morrow and Rev. J. B. Foster together organized the Bluff Station church. This church had a rather stormy existence for the first eight years of its life, and in 1880 it was almost extinct due to removals and quarrels which worked against its continued growth. On January 9, 1881, this church was reorganized, however, by Uncle Sammy Applegate, with twelve charter members.[66] The reorganized church was called the Payette Valley Baptist Church. Within a year its membership had doubled and a rosy future seemed certain for it. In 1885, Applegate resigned as pastor, and Rev. A. B. McPherson succeeded him. A good Sunday School had been organized and the church was in a healthy spiritual

67. Gowen, L. W., Baptists in Idaho, 1864-1904, as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 151.

68. Anonymous, op. cit., p. 23.

69. Gowen, L. W., op. cit, p. 153.

condition. However, by this time the new town of Payette was coming into its own, and the prospect for the church changed considerably.

In 1886, Rev. T. H. Lydston, the man who founded the Baptist church in the town of Payette a year later, came to Idaho from Texas. "Before he began his pastorate at Payette, he was for a short time pastor at Middle Valley."[67] About the same time Uncle Sammy Applegate moved back into the vicinity, after a year or more's residence on Mann's Creek. When Mr. Lydston was ready to organize a church in the town of Payette, Applegate and his wife were on hand as charter members. One account of the organization states that the church was "organized with three members by Rev. T. H. Lydston June 4, 1887."[68] Gowen, however, states that "the church started with but six members and no property."[69] At the Association in Boise, September 22-24, 1887, a letter was read from the church asking admission, and during the sessions the church was admitted and the right hand of fellowship given to its delegate by the Moderator of the Association.

The growth of the church was slow--in 1888 the church in town could report but ten members to the Association, while the old church at Bluff Station reported 35. However, the eventual success of the new church was almost certain, since the railroad had made the new town the center of gravity for all that section. In 1889 the church wrote:

70. Minutes of First Idaho Association, 1889.

71. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 13, Number 4 (April, 1891) p. 98.

72. Minutes of the First Idaho Association, 1891.

73. Book of Clippings, p. 30.

"Weak in numbers.....Have a share in the labors of Rev. T. H. Lydston.....Membership of 13".[70] However, about that time it began to gain strength at the expense of the Payette Valley church. In the fall of 1890, aided by the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the church bought two lots on a corner[71] and an old school house which it remodeled into a church building. The Boise church donated money to purchase seats for the church. By 1891 the church had gathered unto itself property worth $1300, only $300 of which had been received from the outside. However, by 1891, the Payette Valley church had dwindled to such an extent that it was dropped from the rolls of the Association in that year.[72] The Payette church continued to grow and improve itself as this clipping from January, 1892, indicates:

> "The Payette church has not been idle during the month. Their house has been weather-boarded on the outside and on the inside papered and painted. Dr. L. F. Jones, formerly of Boise, but now of Payette, has given the material to paint the outside. At the prayer meeting Wednesday evening, December 23rd, two were received for baptism and one by letter."[73]

But now we must turn our attention to the last church which fits into this chapter on the influence of the railroad: Weiser. We have already noted in Chapter II that Elder Morrow and Uncle Sammy Applegate pioneered in work on Mann's Creek, a branch of the Weiser Valley. They organized a church on Mann's Creek, eight or nine miles up the creek from its mouth. Likewise, J. B. Foster organized the first "Weiser Church" at the mouth of Mann's Creek. Both of these churches were small, and really did not have a

74. Mrs. C. M. Hixon as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 122.

75. Ibid.

large enough population to draw from to assure their continued existence. In her book of reminiscences, Mrs. C. M. Hixon (nee Adrietta Applegate) makes the following comment concerning early religious work in the Weiser Valley:

> "Before there were organized churches, church services were of frequent occurrence as there were pioneer ministers who often gave their services. Their work was centered on Mann's Creek and up the Weiser River, as the first church organizations were at these places. ...These ministers are especially deserving of mention as they travelled long miles with but little remuneration.....It appears that both the Methodists and Baptists formed church organizations in 1882. (In the town of Weiser) Perhaps the Methodists were formed at the earliest date...."74

In 1878 S. M. Jeffries established a store in an abandoned house at a point near where the Old Trail and the Overland Trail crossed the Weiser River, later adding a Postoffice, and a settlement was started. In 1879 the new town became the seat of Washington County. The first school, in a little board house 12x15 feet, was taught by Miss Ella Jeffries, a Baptist. By 1880 a number of little houses had sprung up, and the town boasted a hotel, a feed stable, and a blacksmith shop. Mrs. Hixon reports that "In 1881 the first Sunday School of Weiser was organized in a little board house, about 10x12. Judge E. E. Uttley has the honor of having been the first S. S. Supt.....He was a Methodist, but it was not a Methodist S. S."75

It is only by good fortune that we can relate in detail the story of the early days of the First Baptist

76. Minutes, Weiser Baptist Church, May 13, 1882.

Church of Weiser. In 1923, Spriggs visited Weiser and looked up Mrs. L. L. Shearer, wife of Rev. L. L. Shearer, who was the first pastor of the reorganized church at Boise, and who moved from Boise to be the first pastor of the church at Weiser. She turned over to Spriggs the original records of the Baptist church there which she said she had rescued from a rubbish pile and for the sake of her husband had preserved for fifteen or twenty years. It is the story in these records that we set down on the pages which follow.

The first minutes read:

> "Weiser City, Idaho Ty., May 13, 1882. A Stipulation having been previously made, a meeting was called and met May 13, 1882 to organize a Baptist church in Weiser. The meeting was called to order by Rev. D. P. Maryatt. He moved that Bro. O. Sommer of Mann's Creek Church act as chairman. Sommer was chosen. D. P. Maryatt Jr. was elected Secretary. The Secretary then stated the object of the meeting and read the stipulation. On motion of M. S. Dickerson the Secretary was asked to read such letters as had been handed in. Letters were read recommending:
>
> 1. Marshall S. Dickerson from Redwood, California
> 2. Martha Dickerson from Redwood, California
> 3. Corinna P. Maryatt, Union Baptist Church, Allamakee County, Iowa
> 4. Martha Morehead from Providence Church, Linn County, Oregon
> 5. George Dickerson from Greenwood, Missouri
> 6. D. P. Maryatt Jr. from First Baptist Church, Juanita, Adams County, Nebraska
> 7. Sarah E. Jeffreys, a member at Pendleton whose letter had not arrived.
>
> "These seven by formal declaration formed themselves into a Baptist Church, adopting the New Hampshire Confession as Covenant and Articles of Faith. It was moved to call a Council of all the churches in the First Idaho Baptist Association to meet at Weiser on the 8th of July, 1882 to consider recognizing the church."[76]

77. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 19, Number 7 (July 18, 1882) p. 3.

78. Minutes, First Idaho Association, 1882.

The Council of Recognition met as requested on July 8, 1882. The Council was composed of delegates from Boise City, Payette and Mann's Creek. Three ministers were present: Rev. L. L. Shearer, Rev. S. W. Applegate, and Rev. D. P. Maryatt, Sr. The minutes of the organization meeting were read and approved, and Marshall S. Dickerson was elected Deacon and D. P. Maryatt, Jr., Clerk. The following day, Sunday, a public service of recognition was held. At 10:30 Rev. L. L. Shearer spoke on the subject, "Go Preach My Gospel," using as his text Matthew 28:19. Following morning preaching dinner was served. At 2:00 p.m. Rev. S. W. Applegate preached from John 15:15, "I Am The Vine." Mr. Applegate then extended the right hand of fellowship to the church and Rev. L. L. Shearer gave the charge to the church. Following this Rev. D. P. Maryatt led the congregation in a prayer of recognition. Shearer preached again in the evening, and remained over until Tuesday for another service on that day.[77]

At the third session of the First Idaho Association at the Mann's Creek Church, October 13, 1882, the First Baptist Church of Weiser City was admitted as a member. The report to the association for that year reads: "No pastor; 7 members, D. P. Maryatt Jr., Clerk,P.O., Weiser Bridge, Washington Co., Idaho Ty."[78]

In February, 1883, Rev. J. Earnhart, general missionary for the First Idaho Association, was invited to preach twice a month for the church. At a meeting of the

79. Minutes of Weiser Baptist Church (February 10, 1883) as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 125.

80. The Idaho Statesman, Volume 19, Number 102, (February 27, 1883) p. 3.

church on February 10, 1883, Mr. Earnhart was chosen moderator and the clerk made a statement to the effect that Rev. J. S. Trask of Silver City had placed in their hands subscription pledges for $442 for the purpose of building a meeting house.

> "Solomon M. Jeffreys was elected treasurer of the church. M. S. Dickerson and D. P. Maryatt Jr. were chosen as a building committee. They were to select a third person. Rev. Earnhart was requested to act as agent of the church in raising funds for the building. The question of incorporation was raised. Bro. Earnhart was asked to preach for the church on the second and fourth Sundays of each month."[79]

Later that month another meeting was held, and Rev. D. P. Maryatt, Sr., was received by letter from the First Baptist Church of Chicago, and Rev. J. Earnhart by letter from Savanna, Nebraska. At that meeting on February 25, 1883, the church baptized its first converts: Miss Cora E. Dickerson, Miss Olive Jeffreys, and Miss Ona E. Morehead. These converts were the result of a protracted meeting which Rev. J. Earnhart, assisted by Rev. L. L. Shearer had been holding during the month. The Statesman reports this meeting as follows:

> "Business is booming in Weiser...A protracted meeting every night. Rev. Shearer is engaged in dispensing the Gospel....the parson is a very pleasant gentleman and earnest in his Christian efforts. Rev. Earnhart and Koontz are also engaged in the work."[80]

By May, 1883, the effect of the approaching railroad was more than felt in the town of Weiser, and it was called a "booming city." Dwight Spencer had evidently been there, looking over the situation, for he wrote:

81. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 5, Number 12, (December, 1883) p. 265.

82. Minutes, First Idaho Association, 1883.

> "Then, at Weiser, another flourishing town at the mouth of the Weiser River, and which will soon be on the railroad, we must have another meeting house if we would hold the field. Here we also have a church worshiping in a school house. Twenty-five hundred dollars will build here, and fifteen hundred can be raised on the field. Who will give the thousand? Don't hesitate, for it will soon be determined whether Weiser is to be a Baptist or a Pedobaptist town. Send a check to the rooms immediately and let it be given out in this thriving town that the Baptists have secured lots and will build in the early spring."81

"In the fall of 1882 there was an attendance of 52 scholars in the Weiser S. S. with D. P. Maryatt as Superintendent," writes Mrs. Hixon in her reminiscences. Baptists were definitely in on the ground floor if the Sunday School was that size already. The Association seemed well aware of what was going on, and at its meeting in Boise in October, 1883, voted to recommend to the Home Mission Society that "they grant Weiser $800." The letter of the church to the association that year read as follows:

> "The year has not passed without blessings. Preaching once a month (sometimes twice) by Rev. J. Earnhart and S. W. Applegate. In February, Rev. Shearer assisted Bro. Earnhart in meetings, 3 baptized. The church numbers 12, scarcely more than the number of drinking places in the village. Need a house of worship and a settled Pastor. Subscriptions of $450 toward a building. Given for the H. M. Board $26, D. P. Maryatt,
>
> Church Clerk"82

On November 10, Rev. A. F. Willard, a missionary colporter for the American Baptist Publication Society, was present to lead in the covenant meeting and the following day he officiated at the first communion service. Willard continued to serve the church off and on for the next year or so.

83. Minutes of First Idaho Association, 1884.

84. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 6, Number 8, (August, 1884) p. 200.

85. Minutes of Weiser Baptist Church, November 8, 1884.

There were several additions to the church during the year 1884, among them Mary E. Hunt from Otterville, Missouri. Mrs. Hunt was to become one of the most active members of the church. The church entertained the First Idaho Association in the fall, September 24-28, 1884. The highlight of the meeting as far as the church was concerned came on September 26, when the Association took up a special collection for the building fund of the church which came to $161.50. The Home Mission Board of the Association informed the church at this meeting that they had petitioned the American Baptist Home Mission Society for a good missionary for "Weiser and vicinity."[83] By this time the church was much encouraged in its efforts to build. Spencer had been there during the summer and reported his visit thus:

> "This (Weiser) is the present terminus of the Oregon Short Line, and the county seat of Ada Co. (Spencer was mistaken here--it was Washington County.) Here we can almost hail our brethren in Oregon. A thousand people, and no church! We have a few Baptists working hard to stem the tide of evil that is settling in upon this great West. Preached twice and promised $500 from the Home Mission Society towards building a church. Left them full of hope and with the determination to 'arise and build.'"[84]

On November 8, 1884, the building committee reported the contract let for the new church building and stated that the work was then under way. $300 was reported subscribed by M. L. Hoyt for a bell.[85] In December at its meeting the church voted to ask Rev. J. S. Trask to solicit funds for the church in his travels; and the church formally applied to the Home Mission Society for a gift of $500 and

86. Gowen, L. W. Baptists in Idaho, 1864-1904, as quoted by Spriggs, op. cit., p. 157.

a loan of $300. The church also passed a vote of thanks to the church at Butte, Montana, for a set of communion ware which the Butte church had presented to the Weiser church. Rev. A. B. MacPherson had been supplying the pulpit once a month during this period.

In February, 1885, the church met at the home of Mrs. M. E. Hunt to consider calling a pastor and a committee appointed to canvass the town for the pastor's salary. Rev. L. L. Shearer of Boise was the choice of the meeting. In March the committee reported that $170 had been subscribed for the salary for the coming year, whereupon the church extended a call to Shearer and fixed his salary at $600 a year provided the Home Mission Society would pay three-fourths of it. On July 1, 1885, Shearer came to the church. A service of installation was held on July 19, 1884. Rev. A. B. MacPherson gave the charge to the pastor, Rev. Dwight Spencer preached the sermon, and after the service the assembled group enjoyed a delicious dinner. The occasion was marred only by the fact that Rev. D. P. Maryatt, Sr., the organizer of the church, had passed on to his reward in June. The church thought of him as a "Pillar of Zion" and Gowen, speaking of his work said:

> "He was educated at Madison University. Most of his ministry was in Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and Iowa. He served most of our Idaho churches as occasional supply, but was never settled as pastor among us."[86]

At the Association meeting in Payette, September 24-27, 1885, the Home Mission Board of the Association commended the Weiser Church for settling a pastor in co-

87. Minutes of First Idaho Association, 1885.

88. Anonymous, op. cit., p.12.

operation with the American Baptist Home Mission Society, and urged other churches in the Association to do the same. In its letter to the Association the church wrote:

> "Rev. L. L. Shearer, Pastor. Bro. MacPherson preached once a month until July. Have nearly completed a house of worship.....A flourishing Sunday School."[87]

However, the continued growth of the Weiser church, as in the case of the church in the village of Payette, meant death to the rural church nearby. With the coming of the railroad, the tide of settlement turned toward Weiser and left Mann's Creek in the back-wash. The presence of Uncle Sammy Applegate in the community during 1882 while he farmed the Langley Ranch gave the church a "shot in the arm," but when he moved away the following year and left the little church of eight or nine members without a resident pastor, its death was certain. Applegate continued to preach for the church off and on until 1886, but the membership continued to scatter, and after 1890 we hear nothing further from the church.[88] Another church had died, but the church at Weiser more than took its place in subsequent membership and influence.

Under the leadership of Pastor Shearer, the Weiser church made slow but steady progress. However, he was laboring under difficulties because of the rank infidelity which abounded, the small membership of the church and the lack of financial resources among the membership. Writing concerning his work in 1887, Shearer reported:

> "We are beset with the most active and inveterate enemies of the Gospel I ever met,

89. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 9, Number 4, (April, 1887) p.102.

> men well skilled in infidel literature. They boast their reason and liberality, yet they are as uncompromising and unreasonable as it is possible for rational beings to be.
>
> "However, we are fully assured from observation and experience that this word of life accomplishes that whereto it is sent, when persistently preached in accordance with our Lord's directions and command.
>
> "Our next quarter's report will show some encouraging results, since we are now engaged in a series of meetings in which there is much interest manifested. Six have professed conversion, all grown except one, and several are earnestly seeking. A principal feature of the revival is the scouring up of five old backsliders whom we have dug out of the rubbish of this community. The little church is very much revived and encouraged. Don't fail to offer an earnest prayer for us. Our enemies are correspondingly active, but we know upon whom we depend."[89]

This revival of which Shearer wrote resulted in nineteen additions to the church, and left it much strengthened. Shearer remained as pastor of the church until 1890 when he resigned to accept the pastorate of the church at Colfax, Washington. This same year the church lost by death two of its most valued members, Mr. and Mrs. D. P. Maryatt, Jr. However, despite the loss of the pastor and these members the church continued its work under the vigorous leadership of Mrs. Sarah E. Jeffreys who maintained the Sunday School and other important work. In 1891, Rev. A. H. Lyons came from the church at Pocatello to Weiser, and almost immediately the church responded in a fine way to his coming. An unknown person, writing shortly after Lyons took up his work has left us this clipping:

> "At Weiser, we are glad to say our church is looking upward and believe we plainly see the

90. Book of Clippings, p. 29.

> dawning of brighter days. Bro. Lyons has good audiences and has won a larger measure of esteem than is usually gained by a pastor in so short a time. $400 is in hand to pay on their church debt, and the balance of $100 is to be allowed a longer time to run. They have made some much needed repairs on their house in the way of repairing the interior and lowering the pulpit to a reasonable elevation. We wish large success to Bro. Lyons and the Weiser church."[90]

With this quotation we bring to a close our chapter on the influence of the railroads on Baptist work, though properly speaking, the remainder of this history could be written under this heading. Sufficient has been said to give the reader the feeling, however, that the decade in which the railroads came to Idaho was a fast moving one as far as Baptist history is concerned, and that we were most fortunate in having such a far-sighted man as Rev. Dwight Spencer in general supervision of the work during this period. Churches such as those at Idaho Falls, Blackfoot, Pocatello, and Caldwell might never have come into existence had he not been on the field to guide the work--we thank God for him!

1. Primary source materials for this chapter include:
   a) Reminiscences of Pioneer Work in Idaho, Mss by William Howard Bowler.
   b) Seven Years on the Frontier, Mss by Louis G. Clark.
   c) Rock and Lava, by Coe Hayne, Council on Finance and Promotion of the Northern Baptist Convention, New York, 1942.

CHAPTER V

WILLIAM HOWARD BOWLER[1]

No history of Baptists in Idaho would be complete without relating the story of William Howard Bowler, for seven years the pioneer missionary preacher in South Central Idaho. His work reads like chapters taken from the Book of Acts itself, and to him alone goes credit for organizing seven churches and erecting six churches in an area that before his coming was almost completely without religious services of any kind. While at this writing, due to changing conditions, all but three of the eight churches he served have ceased to exist, nevertheless the influence which his work exerted in the area still lives, and is beyond calculation.

William Howard Bowler was born in Seward County, Nebraska, of devout English emigrant parents who had migrated to that prairie state from London, England. Howard's grandfather, John Bowler, had been a Baptist preacher in London for many years. Howard was the oldest of eight children in this pioneer family. The English newcomers found life extremely difficult in the new country, but despite all manner of hardships (their first three crops failed completely due to drouth and grass-hoppers) they did not lose faith in God, and brought their family up before the Lord. Edwin Bowler, Howard's father, was instrumental in organizing the

2. Reminiscences of Pioneer Work in Idaho, Mss of William Howard Bowler.

Sunday School in a school house near their home in Nebraska, and many years later was called as Pastor of the church at Shoshone which Howard Bowler helped to organize.

Before he was twenty, Howard had his heart set on going as a missionary to Africa. He had become interested in Africa because two of his boyhood friends who had been converted in the Sunday School which his father organized had gone to Africa as missionaries. George Leger gave his life for Christ as a missionary in The Soudan, and Theodore spent three years on the Congo before poor health caused him to return home. However, circumstances were such that Howard did not go to Africa, but rather to a field with as much need of the Gospel--Bellevue.

A short time after he was twenty-two, his family moved to Salt Lake City, Utah. There Howard became an active member of the East Side Baptist Church, serving as Superintendent of the Sunday School and janitor of the church. He became interested in preaching at this time and began by speaking occasionally in his own church and more frequently in Negro churches in the area. Soon his talent as a preacher became apparent to his home church and he was licensed to the ministry at the age of twenty-three. From this point on, we are going to let Howard tell his own story, as he jotted it down in later years.[2] From time to time we will interrupt his narrative to elaborate more fully or quote other authorities on the incidents which he describes.

"Soon after being licensed to preach the gospel by the East Side church of Salt Lake City, I was invited to

supply the Baptist Church at Bellevue, Idaho for a month, during the absence of the pastor, Rev. W. E. Sawyer. In accepting the invitation I had no thought but what my work would be temporary but what has proved to be a residence of twenty-three years in the State began on a day in February, in 1894, when I arrived in Bellevue to fulfill the temporary engagement of supplying the Bellevue Church.

"Bellevue is located in the beautiful Wood River Valley. At this point the valley is not over a mile or two wide precipitous mountain ranges reach almost to the clouds on both sides. The snows of the winter had been piling up on top of each other during the previous months and a fresh fall of at least a foot deep had just visited the valley, making the snow a depth of three feet or over on the level. The perfect white of the level valley and the precipitous sides of the mountain ranges produced one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. I was soon fascinated with the beauty of the valley and learned at once to enjoy the climate and, in a few days, found myself growing interested in the surrounding territory and especially concerned regarding the religious situation.

"A few inquiries soon brought to light the fact that a deplorable state of religious destitution existed in the central part of Idaho, and that I had unintentionally landed in a field as distinctively missionary as if I had gone to Africa. A circle nearly three hundred miles in diameter could have been drawn, with Bellevue as the center, and

within that circle would have been only one Baptist church and only four or five other evangelical churches. The population within the circle would be very sparse, owing to the numerous mountain ranges and the desert sagebrush plains, and yet, there were many valleys sufficiently populated to justify several school houses and school districts and there were numerous villages and towns in the agricultural and mining sections.

"I had always been possessed with a missionary spirit and it was, therefore, natural that a field of this nature should appeal to me. I had been in Bellevue only a couple of weeks when the first call came to respond to the needs of these outlying districts and I walked on the crust of the snow, which was so deep that the fences were all buried, to a school house five miles distant to preach at the close of the day school on Friday afternoon, in a community known as Poverty Flat.

"At the close of the month's engagement the Bellevue pastor returned, but the missionary needs of Idaho had so gripped me that I decided to remain in the State and at once began a ministry to these isolated, destitute communities."

However, Bowler had not been the first to serve a part of this field which he had determined to take up for the Lord. A clipping preserved for us containing a letter from J. O. Burroughs which was published in January, 1891, gives us this interesting account of his work in a part of

3. Book of Clippings, p. 21

4. Ibid., p. 30.

the field:

> "During the last week I preached at four points on this prairie. (Camas Prairie) At the extreme end is Willow Creek. Here I found a colony of fourteen Baptists most of whom have recently come here from Missouri, and are good substantial citizens. Seven miles further west, at Crichton (Criton), I found seven or eight more Baptists, four of whom are the remnants of a small organization started three years ago. At this point I preached twice and promised to hold a meeting with them soon. The fourteen members at Willow Creek will unite to form a church at Crichton hence we can organize with twenty or more. They will, of course, need a pastor. May the Lord send him. At Soldier, five miles further westward, I preached once. From this neighborhood the people can go to Crichton, when a church is established. Fifteen miles west of Soldier is Chimney creek. Here I found a Bro. Head, a Baptist minister recently come from Texas, and a church of seven members. The church has been organized about two months. I preached once for them. At this point and also at Crichton several men, some heads of families, became deeply interested about their souls. Bro. Head has preached some at other points, and everybody speaks well of him. But his circumstances have been such that he has not been able to do much for the Baptist cause on the Prairie. With some help in getting the work started, and then some more substantial help from the State or Home Mission Board, he could do much good for this people. Altogether the trip was a good one. I thank God for the privilege of going."[3]

Rev. F. M. Burton, who served briefly at Bellevue, before Rev. W. E. Sawyer, whom Bowler succeeded, also apparently made regular calls to the Camas Prairie country, for commenting on his work in the area in 1892, he wrote:

> "This field, Hailey and vicinity, in Idaho, gives one ample opportunity to live 'the strenuous life' for to fill an appointment at Soldier and return, one must travel by sled 70 miles over a veritable wilderness of snow, and the two services at Bellevue require 12 miles of travel each time, generally on foot. Many a man however is toiling infinitely harder as he serves mammon than is required to serve the King in this West. Surely we cannot yet count ourselves heroes."[4]

Howard Bowler had been settled in his new field less than a month when a man serving on the jury in the district court told him of conditions in the Camas Prairie country, especially around Soldier, and Bowler immediately decided to do something about it. By the next Friday morning he had left Bellevue by road cart (it being summer time) and was on his way to Soldier. He made his first camp at Willow Creek, and after looking the situation over thereabouts went on to Soldier where he at once began to prospect the situation and discovered that there had not been a Sunday School or preaching service in the place for two years. Three saloons, however, were doing a thriving business. That very Saturday he made arrangements to preach on Sunday in the school house and spent the day advertising the meeting by house to house calls. A big crowd turned out for both morning and evening services, and Howard was so encouraged that he organized a Sunday School and made arrangements to hold regular preaching services every two weeks.

"On August first the pastor resigned and the Bellevue church extended a call to me. I accepted the call on condition that I be allowed half my time to continue doing missionary work. In October twenty converts were baptized in Soldier Creek and a church was organized at Soldier on October 24, 1894. Regular appointments were also given to the Poverty Flat School house and by Thanksgiving five or six converts from Poverty Flat were baptized into the membership of the Bellevue church.

"In response to an urgent appeal, Pine Grove, seventy miles west of Bellevue was visited, and several meetings held, but this out-station was not followed up. Soon regular appointments were begun at LeDuc, twelve miles southwest of Bellevue. Another out-station was opened at Spring Creek, ten miles southwest of Bellevue."

In the meantime, however, things had not been going so smoothly at Soldier. Among the leaders in the religious awakening there had been the Taylor family, religious enthusiasts, positive in their convictionsand not too diplomatic in their approach. Two brothers in the family were evangelists who had held quite a successfulmeeting in Boise the winter of 1894-1895. In the summer of 1895 they returned to Soldier, and our young missionary extended one of them, Lee, the hospitality of the pulpit. However, Lee's approach was so direct that it aroused the antagonism of a large group of persons in the overflow congregation that had assembled in the store building that was used as a church, and they walked out at his invitation. Things went from bad to worse on that Sunday evening, and by the time Lee had finished his sermon a certain group in the town had made up their minds that he was not to be allowed to preach again, and told Bowler and his deacons that trouble would ensue if Lee was permitted to preach as announced on Monday night.

However, Bowler was not one to back down and the service was held as scheduled. Things went smoothly until Lee Taylor got up to preach, and then turmoil broke out. A

brick was hurled through one of the windows, narrowly missing Howard Bowler, sandbags were thrown through the other windows and a shower of rotten eggs, et cetera, ensued. For several hours the congregation was beseiged and finally, about midnight, they decided to close the meeting and retire in a body as best they could, committing themselves to divine keeping. They arose and walked out as compactly as possible. When the door was opened they found their assailants lined up in two ranks across the wide sidewalk, forming a lane leading from the front of the church to the gutter. The church people were greeted in silence and no attempt was made to touch anybody until Lee Taylor stepped outside, when a rush was made for him. Fist fights broke out all over the street (most of them between members of the mob who were using the excitement of the moment as an opportunity to settle old scores). Only by superhuman efforts did Taylor and Bowler manage to escape. Among those present was Edwin Bowler, Howard's father. Writing home to his wife about the event he had this to say:

> "There was perpetrated before my eyes all the horrors I have ever read about in newspapers in connection with lynch or mob law. I will not attempt to describe it, simply because I cannot. Suffice it to say that by superhuman efforts on the part of one or two friends, Taylor finally made his escape. He hid in the backroom of a house on the opposite side of the street until his friends got the team ready. At last they got him away in safety.
>
> "In the meantime the cry arose from among the rioters: 'Where's Bowler? He's at the bottom of this!' And a search was accordingly

5. Hayne, Coe, Rock and Lava, pp 17, 18.

> instituted; but, praise the Lord! by this time the Bowler outfit was beyond the reach of danger. However, they have issued the order that the Taylor family and Howard must leave the country.
>
> "How the thing will end finally, it is difficult to say. The sheriff was out there yesterday (Thursday) and arrested fifteen of their number, and will probably soon arrest more, as there were about forty altogether implicated in the affair; but as to whether justice will be done or not, it is difficult to say. This is a very lawless country. Why, the deputy sheriff himself was present during all the time the trouble was happening and never did a thing to prevent what was going on! One thing is certain, that neither Howard nor myself will attempt anything more in the line of religious work at Soldier for a while. They say right out they don't want it, and they shall have their wish. They are an ungodly set, and they cannot bear anything that proves to be in any way a restraint upon them in the exercise of their wicked courses."[5]

Before leaving the community, young Bowler conferred with the leaders of the church and was assured by them that despite the trouble, the majority of the church people would remain loyal. And so, although the reader can imagine just how much courage it took, Bowler was back in two weeks to hold Sunday morning service. Quite a number of those who usually came were absent, fearing more mob action, but within two months Bowler had so won the confidence of the community that evening services could be resumed, and to his credit it can be said that before he left Soldier for good, every family implicated in the brawl had gotten over their grievances and welcomed him into their homes.

Indeed, within three years our young missionary had led this little church in a building project which resulted in a fine little meeting house, fully equipped and completed without a penny of aid from the denomination. L. G. Clark,

General Missionary for the area, was asked by Bowler to preach at the dedicatory service for the building, and he described the experience thus:

> "Friday evening we had a good service in the church at Bellevue, which made us think of the delightful meetings enjoyed there during our recent associational gathering. Saturday morning Brother Bowler hitched up a fine team of young bronchos to his new carriage--a first-class buggy, by the way--and we started for Soldier, 35 miles west of Bellevue, on Camas Prairie. We soon found ourselves on the Old Oregon road over which Rev. Ezra Fisher and Rev. Hezekiah Johnson journeyed more than 50 years ago as missionaries of the same society in whose name we were going forth. But they traveled wearily and amid great dangers, while we were riding in a most comfortable way over a safe and pleasant road, still the general appearance of the country is the same as it must have been in 1845, for the mountains and the prairie change little in a half century.
>
> "Saturday night we were made welcome in the home of one of the good brethren who have for two years or more been earnestly at work in the interests of Christ's cause and for the establishment of a Baptist church on Camas Prairie. A number of people have settled on this prairie during the last ten years. It is one of the finest in the state, extending about 45 miles in one direction and from 10 to 15 in another. But until recently there has been no church building there.
>
> "Sunday, October 17th (1897), the people gathered from nearly every part of the valley, for the purpose of attending the dedication services of a comfortable house which the little Baptist church at Soldier numbering only 13 members, had by hard work and sacrifice, erected and paid for without help from the Home Mission Society. The general missionary preached the dedication sermon, and the pastor of the church, Rev. W. H. Bowler, after conducting a beautiful responsive service, offered the prayer of dedication. And there came into our hearts a feeling of joy and gratitude as we realized that no longer could the traveler go for 300 miles over the old emigrant road, from Blackfoot to Boise City, without seeing a house of worship. We held another service Sunday evening and also one Monday evening, both of

6. Book of Clippings, pp. 71, 72.

> these services being well attended and full of interest, many were anxious to have the meetings continue, but we were to be at Lost River for Sunday, the 24th, and as this place is about 80 miles northeast of Bellevue, we were obliged to return to Bellevue Tuesday...."[6]

But to return to Bowler's own story of his work in South Central Idaho: "In the fall of 1895 the Lost River Valley was visited, the nearest settlement being ninety miles by wagon road east of Bellevue. During the six weeks it took us to make this trip I preached every night in the week and three times on Sundays and on the average of about two afternoons during the week. I visited every house in the Lost River Valley within twenty miles of the center and conducted meetings in five or six different school districts. As a result of the trip a church was organized on November 11, 1895. A lot was secured for a church building and the stone hauled for the foundation."

The appointment which Clark referred to in the matter quoted above was for the dedication service of this church at Lost River. We continue his account of the time spent in the area below:

> "Sunday (24th) we dedicated the house of worship, the services being much the same as those at Soldier on the Sunday before. On account of the storm the attendance was not as large as it would otherwise have been. But the day was one long to be remembered by the people of Lost River. This is the only meeting house of any kind for a distance of about 70 miles.
>
> "It is a fine building, that will seat 100 or more people. It has been built and paid for without help from the Home Mission Society, and is a credit to Brother Bowler and his faithful helpers on that wide and needy field. It cannot fail to be a great blessing to all that part of

7. Ibid., pp. 73, 74.

the country. -- We remained until Friday morning holding services each evening.

"A number confessed their faith in Christ during these meetings, and there were times when the power of the spirit was manifested in a wonderful degree. Thursday evening was one of the most blessed meetings I ever attended. Among others who witnessed for Christ was a young woman who is teaching school near the church. She was converted in the meetings at Carey last winter, and with a younger sister was baptized and united with the church. But her father because of this sent her and her sister away from home, and she has been obliged to suffer much for Christ. Still her faith and devotion is unshaken and she spoke in a way to indicate not only the genuineness of her Christianity, but also to show that she has most reasonable possibilities of usefulness as a Christian worker.

"As I think about all that I have seen and heard during this most interesting trip, I am led to believe that if the Home Mission Society had done nothing more for Idaho than simply to make possible the work which has already been accomplished in Brother Bowler's field, it would have done enough to fully justify all the expenditures it has made for the evangelism of the state."[7]

Rock and Lava, a book by Coe Hayne on Bowler's work in South Central Idaho, describes in detail the ninety mile trip past what is now Craters of the Moon National Monument over to the Lost River country. Among the first people Bowler met in this part of the world were the George Ferrises. George Ferris ran two stores in the valley, and in addition had an invaluable water right which he used to irrigate some of the best land in the valley. He and his wife were God-fearing folk, and since their children were growing up they had decided to sell out and move to a place which would afford religious opportunities, rather than continue longer in a pagan environment. However, when Howard Bowler came

8. See Hayne, Coe, Rock and Lava, Chapters II and III.

9. Letter from Mrs. R. J. McMahon, January 18, 1943.

along and brought the light of the Gospel into the darkness of the valley, organizing a church, they changed their minds and became very loyal supporters of the work.[8]

In the spring of 1896, a church was organized at Shoshone, fifty-two miles south of Bellevue on the main-line of the Oregon Short Line. We have already noted that at least one Baptist came into what was destined to be Shoshone ahead of the railroad, and it is from his wife, Mrs. R. J. McMahon, that I have obtained the following information about the Shoshone church:

> "The Shoshone Church was organized in 1896 following evangelistic meetings conducted by Rev. Richard Williams. Dr. Bowler had a part in its organization--he was at that time engaged in missionary work in the Wood River Valley, the mother church being at Bellevue.
>
> "My family came to Shoshone in November, 1897 and my father who was a lay preacher, took over the pastorate until the time of his illness and death in March, 1900. The present building was erected in 1901 and dedicated on October 20 of that year. Dr. Bowler was pastor at that time, but soon after he resigned to accept the position as Missionary-at-large for Southern Idaho. Our next pastor was Rev. T. L. Lewis from Missoula, Montana."[9]

Mrs. McMahon was a sister of Howard Bowler, and continues to this day to be active in Baptist work in the State. Several years ago her husband died, and she moved to Pocatello in order to be near her only son, Dr. John McMahon, who is at present organist of the Baptist church there.

The story of the building of the Shoshone church, to which Mrs. McMahon alluded in her letter, can be told in the following quotations. A clipping preserved for us gives

10. Book of Clippings, p. 126.

Bowler's description of the building then going up at Shoshone:

> "I spent most of the month on my regular fields, Shoshone and Leduc, giving considerable attention to Shoshone, as we are building a church edifice there. It is rock church, 26x38 and will cost us about $1,300. We have only a membership of twelve, and yet have built the church without asking anyone outside the membership for a dollar, and all the members but one are poor people. It is an evidence of what a few devoted workers can do if they have a real interest in God's work."[10]

The dedication services for the church were a little unusual. L. G. Clark, the General Missionary, took part in the service and his report is preserved for us in the following quotation:

> "The church edifice had been beautifully adorned with plants and flowers, and gorgeous autumn leaves, and early in the morning, just as the sun was rising over the great mountains, a company of joyful and earnest worshippers gathered in the new house for a season of prayer and praise. This sunrise prayer meeting was one of the most delightful, helpful and impressive meetings I ever attended. Rev. E. S. Rogers led, and the Spirit of the Lord seemed to fill the house. The heart of every one seemed to be full of thanksgiving and praise, so that the place was none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven for our souls. At 11 o'clock the dedicatory services were held. Rev. W. H. Bowler, the faithful pastor of the church, directed the service. Most beautiful music was rendered by the choir and congregation. The sermon was preached by the General Missionary, L. G. Clark, and after a very impressive responsive dedication service led by the pastor, the prayer of dedication was offered by Rev. E. S. Rogers of Hagerman. The house was filled with a congregation that evidently enjoyed the service from the beginning to the end. As there was no money to be raised to pay for the house, the pastor suggested that the offerings of the day be devoted to state missions. And there was a free-will offering for this object, amounting

11. Ibid., pp. 109, 110.

> to something over $25. This church edifice is the fourth which Brother Bowler has been permitted to see dedicated on the field which he has been seeking to care for during the last eight years. There are also two other houses of worship, one at Hailey and the other at Hagerman, that he has been more or less instrumental in securing. The house at Hagerman is to be dedicated within a few weeks, and the house at Hailey was dedicated last August."11

But to go back once again to Bowler's own account of his work: "In December, 1896, a gracious revival broke out at the LeDuc station which resulted in the organization of a church in January, 1897. This church is now known as the Berean Church of Picabo...." However, here again, our friend has cut short an exceedingly interesting story, so we must go to other sources to piece it out. There had come to the neighborhood of Picabo a devout Christian couple by the name of Adam Ifland. They became fast friends of the young preacher and he came to regard them as second parents. It was to Mr. Ifland that Howard when when in need of fresh horses, or repairs for his buggy or sleigh, and Mrs. Ifland mended his clothes for him, sewed on buttons, and in general took care of him when he needed help.

These people, though poor in worldly possessions, were rich in grace and when they found themselves in the midst of a community destitute of all Christian influences and privileges, they began to do what they could to remedy the situation. First of all they organized a Sunday School; then when they had that well started, Mr. Ifland went to Bellevue to hunt up the "kid-preacher" that the whole country was talking about. Mr. Ifland was most urgent in his invi-

tation, asking that Bowler come as soon as possible and preach the gospel to the people. At the earliest opportunity the missionary went down and began a series of meetings in a rude structure called the LeDuc schoolhouse. He was entertained by Adam and Mary Ifland in their log house built on a hillside. Although it was a cold winter, people rode in to church from great distances. The people of the immediate community greatly rejoiced in the meetings, which went on with power, resulting in not a few conversions. In time arrangements were made to hold Sunday School in the schoolhouse instead of the Ifland home, and finally steps were taken to organize a church. Bowler was not one to allow a flock to sit back and rest on its laurels, and so soon he had a movement under way to build a church in the newly occupied community. It was four long years, however, before the church was completed and dedicated.

The dedication service was held during the closing sessions of the East Idaho Association which met with this church on September 14 - 16, 1901. Someone there, reporting on the meetings, left us this record of events:

> "The climax of the association was reached at 11 o'clock when the church was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God. Rev. L. G. Clark, our beloved general missionary, preached the dedicatory sermon. No church edifice was erected at a greater sacrifice than this. A mere handful of members, none rich in this world's goods, began and completed a building 20x34. Surely God will reward such sacrifice and labor as shown by these people. Brother Clark appreciated the situation by addressing the people from II Samuel 24:24. He showed David's manhood and sturdy character in refusing to make an offering to God of that which cost him

12. Ibid., p. 112.

> nothing. The sermon will long be remembered, because of the personal application of the text to the direct situation. All the people wept for very joy in seeing their fondest hopes realized in this, the completion of their house of worship. Brother Clark has endeared himself to all hearts throughout the association by his untiring efforts to extend Baptist influence...."12

The determination of this small group of Christians to have a church building is illustrated by the way in which they secured materials for their church. By buying an old, but large, building at Bellevue, where such places could be obtained at very reasonable prices because of the collapse of the mining boom, they secured almost all the lumber they needed for their church building. They tore the old building to pieces and drew the lumber fifteen miles or more to the place where they decided to build the church, and working together, the missionary often working with them, (as he had done with the men on the other fields where he had encouraged the building of churches), they succeeded at last in building a very comfortable church. Among those most interested in the building of the church was Adam Ifland and his wife, and to them should go the credit for the success of the enterprise.

This church at Picabo was called the Berean Church in honor of the Berean Baptist Church of Carbondale, Pennsylvania, which had provided hymn-books for the Sunday School when work was first begun in Silver Creek Valley. A Mrs. McFarland had been a member of the Carbondale church before moving west into the valley, and when the Sunday School was

13. See Chapter VI.

14. Hayne, op. cit., p. 51

organized by the Iflands she wrote her home church, which promptly supplied hymn-books for the new Sunday School. We have not exhausted the story of the church at Picabo, but since other details are preserved for us in the book Rock and Lava[13] we will move on in our story of Bowler's work.

After the meetings at LeDuc which resulted in organizing the Berean Church, Bowler went on to Carey, ten miles west on the road to Lost River. When he arrived at Carey he was dumbfounded to find the town filled with Mormons who cared nothing for real Christianity. There was not even one person upon whom he could call to pray. The man who had invited him to Carey, one of the trustees of the school, was not a professing Christian, but thought that the right sort of preacher could do a lot for the town, and so had sent for this missionary. The Mormons had a building which they called a meeting house, but it was used largely for dances and cheap shows. There never had been a Gentile service in the place until Bowler arrived. The meetings, held in the schoolhouse, were well attended, and resulted in many conversions, among them two girls, one of whom was mentioned in the story of the Lost River church on page 124.

So great was the interest aroused by the meetings that even the Mormon Bishop was touched. One day he came to the young preacher and said: "Mr. Bowler, I do not wish to argue with you. I have been attending your services, as you know. I only wish to say this to you: if you are right, I am wrong."[14] The report of the meetings finally reached the authorities of the Latter Day Saints church in Salt Lake

15. Book of Clippings, p. 92.

City, Utah, and one of the "Twelve Apostles" accompanied by another very prominent leader of the Mormon church came to Carey at once and put down the movement that threatened to uproot Mormonism in Carey. However, twenty-two converts remained true, and a church was promptly organized around them. However, the church did not live too long. Within a year after its organization in a report on the East Idaho Association this comment was made concerning Carey:

> "The farms are being bought up by Mormons and present indications suggest that the population will ultimately be entirely of this class. Rev. W. H. Bowler, who organized the church, is still the pastor, but realizes the prospect is not as bright as could be desired."[15]

During all this time our missionary had been keeping a watchful eye on the situation in Hailey, holding services there occasionally. Finally interest developed to the point where Bowler thought a church organization would be justified, and so on August 24, 1900, the Hailey Baptist Church was brought into being through the joint efforts of Bowler and L. G. Clark, the general missionary. Bowler had been able to persuade his boyhood chum, Theodore Leger, who had come home from Africa because of ill health, to come out to Idaho to assist him on his field, and he at once took over the Hailey church. The story of the building of the Hailey church is told in his words, as follows:

> "Under existing conditions and circumstances a church without a meeting-house is very much like a traveler without a train. If any progress is made it is sure to be at a slow pace, and a pace that seems to be exceedingly slow in this age of steam and electricity....We certainly ought to be grateful here for the help through which we were able to complete our house

16. Book of Clippings, pp. 127, 128.

> of worship. Upon reaching here in August, 1900, I found in Hailey, which is a county seat and a very important center, a small Baptist church of some sixteen members. The organization had been effected a few months previously through the agency of Rev. L. G. Clark, our general missionary, and Rev. W. H. Bowler, of Shoshone, Idaho. This little church had no house of worship nor any prospect for a church home. Soon after my arrival we began services in a hall over a saloon, the only available. Our services and Sunday School were often interrupted by the loud profanity and noise below. We saw that we could not continue in this manner, so we met together and decided to make an effort to build. We raised what we could among ourselves, then we canvassed the town for aid to build, but when we had made every effort, we still were far behind in the necessary amount. Then it was that our Home Missionary Society granted us a gift of $250. This timely aid filled us with new courage. We made a few more sacrifices, some kind friends gave us some aid, and the amount necessary, over and above what we had already received, was made up. We now have a neat church home, capable of seating 175 people, comfortably seated, lighted, carpeted, and papered. We also have an organ, hymn books, and other necessaries. We have regular services every other Sunday and Sunday School every Sunday. Moreover our work is established in a very important center, and although we are young and weak, and few in number, and to some extent persecuted, we believe that the God whom we serve and whose we are will glorify himself through us not only in this town, but in the regions round about us in this young and thriving State."[16]

The reader would think by now that Bowler had spread himself as thinly as possible and would give up trying to serve any more territory--but the missionary's ear was ever attune to the Macedonian call and when an appeal came to visit the Hagerman valley, he felt compelled to answer with his presence. He reported his visit there as follows:

> "During the first part of December (1900), I came down here (Hagerman) 35 miles from Shoshone, for 3 or 4 days, to look the field over; found a valley with probably a population of 500, practically destitute of all gospel privileges.

17. Ibid., p. 126.

> They seemed hungry for the gospel and were very anxious for me to take up work. So I came back last Saturday and started a special meeting yesterday. The prospect seems good for a very interesting meeting, and I am praying and hoping for many convictions.."17

The meeting was successful, and a church organized at Hagerman on February 2, 1901. Within a short time a pastor was settled there (Rev. E. S. Rogers) and soon a building erected. Bowler's last significant work as a self-appointed missionary to this field was the organization of a church at Arco in the Lost River country when the building of a railroad into the valley created a new town. This church was organized in March, 1902, and very soon absorbed the old Lost River church. But to return to Bowler's own account of his work:

"From 1894 to 1900 I was the only Baptist preacher within the 300 mile circle and so I had to minister to all these organized churches and, at the same time, give regular services to a number of outstations. All these places had to be reached by team and buggy during the summer time, and team and sleigh during the winter. In order to do the amount of traveling necessary to cover these fields it was necessary to have at my disposal three or four teams.

"On account of constantly attempting to care for some new field, frequent adjustments had to be made in my schedules. During one entire summer I carried out the following schedule of appointments in order to cover this needy field: On Tuesday morning I left Bellevue for Soldier, thirty-five miles to the west and preached at that church Tuesday night. Wednesday I drove the thirty-five miles back to Bellevue and

conducted the church prayer meeting. On Thursday I drove from Bellevue to Carey, twenty-two miles, and conducted the prayer meeting at that church. Friday I started for the Lost River Valley, driving the first day to Dead Man's Flat, and the next to Lost River, forty-five miles, and preached Sunday morning and evening at Lost River and at an outstation in the afternoon. Monday was given to doing pastoral work on Lost River. Tuesday I drove back as far as Dead Man's Flat, forty-five miles. Wednesday I drove from Dead Man's Flat to Picabo, thirty-two miles, and conducted prayer meeting with that church. Thursday I traveled from Picabo to Carey for the purpose of conducting a prayer meeting there. Friday and Saturday were given to pastoral work at Picabo and Carey. On Sunday morning I preached at Carey, drove seven miles to Picabo for an afternoon service, and then drove fifteen miles to Bellevue for the evening service. Monday was given to pastoral work in Bellevue and Tuesday morning I again started for Soldier on my regular two weeks schedule.

"This two weeks schedule required driving 268 miles between regular points. The extra pastoral work and side trips required from fifty to seventy-five miles additional travel, so during the two weeks I traveled regularly from 300 to 350 miles, cared for five organized churches and two or three outstations, preached seven or eight sermons and conducted eight prayer meetings. (This might be considered

a fairly busy period. During the calendar year of actual work, I had my team hitched up and drove some-where every day in the year, including all holidays.) Within a four-year period I drove my teams a total distance equal to a trip around the world.

"When I began my work in 1894 there were nine Baptist churches on the western side of the State, comprising the First Association. There were three Baptist churches on the eastern side of the State which were organized into the East Association. Bellevue was located about half way between these two groups of churches belonging to the First Association and the East, making a total of thirteen churches in the State. It mattered little to Bellevue which Association she belonged to on account of the equal distance between the two groups of churches and owing to the fact that it would require at least 150 miles or over of travel by railroad to reach the nearest church in either group, but as the East Association had just been organized and only had three churches, it was decided that we had better help the weaker group and so we withdrew from the First Association for the purpose of uniting with the three churches to the east of us.

"The year Bellevue joined the East Idaho Association the annual meeting was to be held at Idaho Falls which would require over 200 miles travel by railroad. As the fare in those days was five cents a mile, the expense prohibited a delegation from our church attending. It was therefore decided that we would go by team which would require a journey

of over 300 miles for the round trip. The Sunday before the Association I spent at Soldier and in order to reach Idaho Falls it was necessary for me to leave Soldier at the close of the preaching service Sunday night and drive all night on the return trip to Bellevue. Upon reaching Bellevue early in the morning I joined three other delegates who were ready to start and in a light spring wagon, with a good team, the four of us started on our long trip and traveled until late Thursday night when we reached Idaho Falls. The undertaking of traveling three hundred miles by team to attend the Association won the admiration of the delegates and when we invited the Association to come to Bellevue for its next meeting our request was gladly granted.

"When the time came for the Association to meet at Bellevue, delegates from the Blackfoot Church followed our example of the preceding year and came across by team while from the other two churches the delegates came by rail. By this time the four churches which had been organized in the vicinity of Bellevue were ready to unite with the Association, and there was great rejoicing as it was realized that the East Association had been more than doubled in membership. The three churches were now increased to seven."

This Association meeting at Bellevue was a memorable one, and so we interrupt Bowler's narrative once again long enough to add this eye-witness acount of it from another source:

> "The Third Annual Session of the East Idaho Association met with the Bellevue Baptist Church, September 17-19, 1897. The meetings

18. Book of Clippings, pp. 62, 63.

were characterized throughout by a warmth of devotion and a spiritual tone above what is usual at such gatherings.

"The reports from the churches were encouraging. Nearly all the churches reported accessions by baptism and furnished other evidences of having made gratifying progress during the past year. Especially cheering was the report of the work accomplished by Brother Bowler, missionary at Bellevue and vicinity. This young and vigorous pastor has made his influence felt in all directions and has been instrumental in organizing four churches, two of which have been in the midst of hard times built without Home Mission assistance, comfortable houses of worship. Brother Bowler preaches to all of these churches in addition to his work at Bellevue and to do this travels with his team 125 miles each week. Let no one suppose that this riding is over asphalt pavements. Bellevue is like Jerusalem of old, surrounded by mountains, and many miles of the roads rarely secure any special attention from the roadmaster.

"The churches to which this missionary preached reported over 30 added by baptism and a goodly number of these converts attended the meetings of the association and contributed largely to their success. Among the converts was a gentleman 78 years of age who said that last January he believed he was the worst man in Idaho. Perhaps he did himself injustice in this remark, but now he is a very earnest servant of God. His name is Ansil Decatur and he is a grandson of Commodore Decatur, who early in this century brought the Dey of Algiers to terms and performed other valuable services in the United States Navy. Another very earnest Christian among the delegates was a saloon-keeper, but who now keeps all out of saloons over whom he can exercise sufficient influence. These serve to illustrate the character of the work done by Brother Bowler."[18]

For a long time prior to the meeting the pastor and the church had been making prayerful preparation for it. They hoped that inasmuch as the community had never before had an opportunity to enjoy such a meeting, it should be of such a character as to make a deep and abiding impression

for good upon the minds and hearts of all who should attend. All the churches of the association had been urged to send as large a number of representatives as possible, and every effort was made to provide the best of entertainment for them when they arrived. The program arranged was one of interest to all. Commenting on the meetings L. G. Clark later wrote:

> "The spiritual element was made most prominent in all the arrangements, while food for the body was provided in great abundance. It was evident that the chief thought in the minds of those who had matters in charge was that there should be a rich feast for the soul. In accordance with this thought, it was arranged among other things that very early each morning there should be a prayer and conference meeting in the church building. These "sunrise" services were most delightful and helpful to all who were permitted to attend them...."
>
> "Sometimes there was present at these sunrise prayer meetings a brother whose presence never failed to be a benediction. He was the General Superintendent of Missions, Rev. H. C. Woods, D.D., who though in feeble and failing health had, almost at the risk of his life, made a long journey in order to be present at this Association meeting. There were days when the life of our dear brother seemed very nearly gone and we feared that the time of his departure was at hand; that to this noble, meek and gentle man of God, as to Moses of old, the mountain vision would prove to be in reality the very gate of heaven.
>
> "Well do we remember his presence at the early meeting one morning after a long night of great suffering, a night which seemed at times would be to him the last night of his earthly life. But when the morning came he was somewhat better and very anxious to be at the meeting, and so he came. That morning he did what was very unusual for him. He spoke of his sufferings. Yet not in the spirit of complaint, rather that he might comfort his brethren. In great feebleness of body yet with a strong, clear voice, as soft and sweet as the voice of an angel, and with a face all radiant with heavenly light, he talked to us of God and of eternal glory. He told us how that

19. Clark, Louis G., Seven Years on the Frontier, Mss., pp. 14-16.

> in the suffering and darkness of the night that was gone, at times he thought that he would soon be free from pain and forever with his Lord. Yet much as he prized the hope of heaven and longed to be with Christ in the land of rest, still he desired to remain with us a little longer if it should be God's will that he might have a little larger share in the kingdom of his Lord in these young unfolding empires among the mountains of the new west that he loved so well. He urged us all to be faithful servants of God, that when the end should come, as soon it would, we might turn our thoughts heavenward, and, lifting our faces and our hearts to God say, 'Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou Gavest me to do.' And as we looked into the shining face, and listened to the soul stirring words of our dear brother, it seemed to us that in very deed God had sent us a message fresh from heaven, a message worth all the suffering it had cost...."[19]

But to return to Bowler's account: "The time had now come when it was evident that the field could be not adequately cared for, nor could development work be expected, unless other pastors were secured, and on August 1, 1900, I was relieved of part of the field by the coming of Rev. T. A. Leger, who became pastor at Leger and Soldier. (The work at Bellevue had died due to the collapse of the mining boom and consequent removal of members). In October of that year Rev. F. R. Latter was located as pastor at Lost River and Arco. The next year a pastor was secured for the Hagerman field. (Rev. E. S. Rogers) Then in 1902 I accepted the position as district missionary for Idaho. By this time pastors were provided for all the territory I had opened up and so inadequately cared for during the previous years and my work became scattered over the entire state."

After so much effort had been put into the several churches of this great field which Bowler served, it is saddening to have to report that only three of the churches survived. After a struggle of several years with Mormonism and out-and-out paganism, the work at Soldier was abandoned. The Berean Church at Picabo, and the church at Hagerman lived longer, but they were not ever able to gain sufficient strength to support their own pastors and both died in the twenties. However, Shoshone, Arco, and Hailey are still very much alive and active in the Central Association; and many of the people who came in contact with Bowler moved into other localities and supported Baptist work there.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST YEARS
IN FORTY YEARS OF GROWTH

In the previous chapter we have followed the exploits of one man in South Central Idaho as he made Baptist history, and while it is true that all history generally can be reduced essentially to the story of one or two key men, nevertheless, things of importance do occasionally happen outside the sphere of these men. While Idaho history can largely be written around the lives of Hamilton, Morrow, Foster, Spencer and Bowler, nevertheless, others did make a contribution. While Bowler was laboring so faithfully in the South Central part of the State, other people were working in the rest of the State, and it is the purpose of this chapter to tell of their work in the "gay nineties" and the turn of the century.

We have noted before that the coming of the railroad even affected the Boise church, though it was not on the main-line. The general influx of people into the State brought by the railroad naturally produced a boom in this city, the capitol of the State, and the boom resulted in an increased membership for the Boise church and enabled it to become completely self-supporting and even launch out on a building program. The reader will remember that we left the story of the Boise church at the point that Rev. L. L. Shearer had resigned to accept the pastorate at Weiser.

The story is continued from that point.

Rev. George H. Newman was called by the church to succeed Mr. Shearer. Mr. Newman came to the church as a licentiate from New York State and took up his work on November 19, 1885. He was ordained by the Boise church on January 16, 1886, Rev. L. L. Shearer and Rev. A. B. Mac Pherson serving on the ordaining council. He served the Boise church for nearly two years under appointment from the American Baptist Home Mission Society and in that time had thirty-two additions to the church. He resigned September 5, 1887, to accept the pastorate at Caldwell where he served until 1891, at which time he accepted the pastorate of the Baptist church at Colfax, Washington. Newman had come west from Amherst College, Massachusetts, for his health, and seems to have been profoundly shocked by the great spiritual need in the area. Writing from Boise in the spring of 1886, he said:

> "The missionary in these western fields is in constant anxiety over the ground that remains untouched, and the harvest that to all appearances must go ungathered. We need a dozen more good men in Idaho alone, and at this rate what would be the measure of our actual need for the whole West? I am constantly hearing of settlements which are awaiting the Gospel minister, but he has not come. When will he come? When the Home Mission Society has the <u>money</u> with which to send him,--is not this the true answer? Those of us who are here cannot attend to these wants, for on our own fields is more work than we can do, and the settlements are so distant that we cannot help them by occasional visits. How the Son of Man--were He now here in the West--how He would groan over the people who are without a shepherd, and sigh over the perishing harvests. How long, how long, must God's work be hindered for the want of money, and that too in a land rich with buried

1. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 8, Number 4, (April, 1886) p. 88.

2. Manual, First Baptist Church of Boise, 1916, p. 9.

3. Book of Clippings, p. 15.

> wealth! Would that the gold and silver taken from these valleys and mountains might bring back to us the bread of life!"[1]

And indeed, the field was white unto the harvest, for Rev. L. W. Gowen, who followed Newman's successor, T. E. Owens who served for ten months, at Boise and who was long to be identified with Baptist work in the State, received over 100 persons into the Boise church in the three and one-half years of his service there, from December 1, 1888 to June 15, 1892.[2] Gowen's pastorate was "marked by frequent conversions, sound teaching and faithful discipline." During his pastorate it assumed self-support and in addition came to pledge nearly as much on the district missionary's salary as they had been pledging for their own pastor when Gowen took over. It was in December, 1890, that the church decided to assume full support for its pastor, and thus became one of the first in the State to arrive at church adulthood. Thus the year 1890 is one to be remembered by historians: Idaho was admitted to the Union in that year, and the First Baptist Church of Boise became financially independent![3]

In November, 1891, the old church property was sold and lots purchased a few weeks later upon which it was proposed to build a new church. At the annual meeting, held in December, 1891, the question of a building committee was brought up and was settled together with several other matters pertaining to the enterprise of building by the adoption of the following resolutions:

4. Ibid., pp. 26, 27.

WHEREAS: Under the contracts of sale and purchase made by the trustees and locating committee, there will remain in our treasury as the basis of a building fund, the sum of $3500. Now therefore be it resolved:

First: That the Board of Trustees be and are hereby created a Building Committee, with full power to re-arrange the buildings to the best advantage upon our new building site; to raise and expend money for the purpose of improvement, building and furnishing; and to make and execute contracts in the name of this corporation.

Second: In addition to the fund remaining upon the sale and purchase herein mentioned, the Building Committee are instructed to raise if possible by volunteer offerings the sum of $4000, to be expended in the erection and furnishing of the new house of worship, re-arrangement of existing buildings and attendant expenses; and this church hereby pledges itself collectively and individually to labor earnestly prayerfully and in self-sacrifice to raise this amount.

Third: The subscriptions to this fund shall be taken as far as practicable in the form of promissory notes, due at such times as may be agreed upon between the Building Committee and the subscribers. The limit of indebtedness which the Building Committee may assume beyond the money and valid subscription notes in hand is $1000; the total indebtedness to carry over to the year 1893 shall not exceed this sum, at least one-half of which must be provided for in subscription notes payable in that year.

Resolved: That a meeting be held at the church the 21st of January, 1892, at 2 o'clock p.m., to consider plans, and any one may be present, with drawings, and have the privilege of explaining them to the church."[4]

Building began in the spring of 1892 and the new church was finished in time for the congregation tc worship in it for the first time on Christmas, 1892. But in the meantime, L. W. Gowen, having put the church on its feet, and having gotten the building program well under way, resigned on June 15, 1892, to accept work out of the State. During the latter part of his pastorate in Boise the church

5. The Pacific Baptist, Volume 8, Number 40, (October 4, 1894) p. 10.

also built a parsonage costing $600 and inaugurated a church paper called the Boise Baptist.

Rev. D. M. McReynolds succeeded Gowen as pastor on September 1, 1892. "He had been pastor for four years of the Central Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, and came to Boise in the summer of 1892 with a party of seven others to visit his cousin by marriage, R. F. Cook, and go with him into the Teton mountains. Supplying the Boise church for a Sunday or two resulted in his call and pastorate."[5] He had not been pastor of the church quite six months when the new building was ready for dedication. We are most fortunate in having preserved for us from several different sources all the details of the dedication service, including interesting items concerning the cost of the church and who provided for its furnishing, and since the Boise Church Manual does not include any of these, we are quoting at length below. Rev. C. A. Woody, Editor of the Pacific Baptist at the time, preached the Dedicatory Sermon and reported the day's events in detail to his readers. His report of the dedication, which was held January 29, 1893, we quote below:

> "The morning service for Sunday was announced for 10:30 and by that time the seats were filled by a most attractive congregation numbering from 500 to 600, though some wanted to have us believe it larger by 200. The following program had been arranged by the pastor:
>
> Exordium, "Praise God from Whom"
> Invocation, Rev. Mr. Barton of Presbyterian Church
>
> Hymn 98

6. The Pacific Baptist, Volume 7, Number 5, (February 2, 1893) p. 9.

Scripture Reading, Rev. J. B. Foster
Prayer, Rev. I. S. Hicks of Caldwell
Hymn 614
Anthem, "Praise Waiteth for Thee
Sermon, Rev. C. A. Woody of Portland
Hymn 615
Dedicatory
Historical Reading, A. M. Brumback
Report of Bldg. Comm., R. F. Cooke
Treasurer's Report, C. A. Clark
Offering "Freely ye have received, freely give."
Prayer of Dedication, Pastor
Solo, "By the Splendor of the Heavens"
Benediction

The sermon was from Eph. 2:20, on "Christ, the Chief Cornerstone of the Church." The people listened patiently, being much helped by the comfortable pews in which they sat.

"The report of the treasurer showed that the total cost of the house had been $15,900. The trustees had arranged to carry a debt of $2700 and the balance had been provided for except $1,420, and this amount they asked the congregation to provide on the spot. To us was entrusted the pleasing and for the first time, enjoyed privilege of asking for that amount. We used 45 minutes and in that time such was the liberality and enthusiasm of the people, we secured in pledges and cash $1,580, and the evening offering added $50 to this, making the total amount secured $1,647.59.

"Pastor McReynolds then in a most fitting prayer offered the house, which the hands of this people have builded, to the Lord God."[6]

Our old friend, Rev. J. B. Foster, who had been instrumental in effecting the first organization of the church in 1874, was there as the reader has noticed by the program listed above. His report of the day, preserved for us in the Book of Clippings contains some interesting details not mentioned by Woody:

"Bro. Woody preached a most excellent sermon from Eph. 2:20. His theme was, "Jesus of Nazareth, His Humanity and His Divinity. The Cornerstone of Hope." Bro. Woody has many

7. Book of Clippings, pp. 32, 33.

8. The Pacific Baptist, Volume 8, Number 35, (August 30, 1891) p. 6

> relatives here whom he met for the first time in life and seemed to enjoy his work and visit among them like a bird just out of its cage....The report of the building committee shows that the church is well organized for work, and that the various departments all tried to do their duty. The Ladies Society furnished the seats and pulpit at a cost of $900. The young people, a very large and beautiful window, at a cost of $350, and an organ at $500, said to be the best in the state. The Children's Mission Fund, a beautiful memorial window for one of their number who died, costing $100 and all the carpet for the entire building, which cost about $250. One good sister, Mrs. Wm. Wilson, furnished a 1200 pound bell of the finest quality, besides a very liberal amount to the general building fund. So you will see that each branch had its special work and all succeeded, but for fear of becoming tedious, I cease."[7]

Thus within twelve years after Pierce stopped over in Boise briefly to get Baptist work under way again, Baptists could say that they had a church building equal to any in the State. And the best part of the story is that the debt on the church was not permitted to be dragged along over a long period of time, but rather was liquidated before the next year (1894) closed. McReynolds reported it thus to the Pacific Baptist: "Despite the hard times, with the generous assistance of our New York Board we have cleared our new edifice of debt, the sum of $2,900 having been paid. This clears the way for an advance movement all along the line which we shall not be slow to avail ourselves of."[8]

Mr. McReynolds' pastorate was marked by a continued spiritual growth and yearly revivals which constantly added to the strength of the church. One of the most successful of these revivals was led by Evangelist W. A. Lindsay during January and February, 1896. Reporting it to the Pacific

9. The Pacific Baptist, Volume 20, Number 7 (February 13, 1896)

10. Manual, First Baptist Church of Boise, 1916, p. 9.

11. Book of Clippings, p. 82.

Baptist, Pastor McReynolds wrote:

> "The labors of Evangelist Lindsay closed with my church last Sabbath. However, for the benefit of the young members we are still having evening prayer meetings with an occasional profession and much interest. We have had a glorious revival, the good influences of which are felt throughout our entire membership. We have had eighty additions to our church with half a score more in sight. Strange to say, four-fifths of these are males and perhaps not more than fifteen of the entire number are under twenty years of age and ranging up to sixty. Lindsay seems especially adapted to this field. His easy style, sympathetic appeals and personal experiences draw the masses to a most wonderful degree. We have decided to adopt him here in Idaho. To this end my church has subscribed enough to insure him a reasonable support if he should realize as much as we anticipate on the field. This virtually secures us a missionary in Southern Idaho for the next six months at least; and under God we believe glorious results will follow. Bro. and Sister Lindsay go from this place to Nampa to assist Pastor Lydston. May God bless them in the work."[9]

McReynolds closed his work with the Boise church on April 1, 1897. We do not wonder that the author of the historical sketch in the Boise Church Manual said of his pastorate: "These were great days for Boise Baptists. A house of worship on the new lot was completed, furnished and dedicated. The membership doubled, and a fine spirit of generous giving and personal self-sacrifice was developed."[10]

Rev. J. B. Weber was called by the church from the church at Clinton, Illinois, to succeed Mr. McReynolds, taking up his work April 3, 1897. Weber was a well educated man, having graduated from La Grange College, Missouri, in 1871, and before entering the ministry taught in several Baptist schools, serving as president of one of them for five years.[11] During his pastorate the State Baptist Young

12. See The Pacific Baptist for November ?, 1897, as quoted in Book of Clippings, p. 67.

13. Book of Clippings, p. 97.

14. Ibid., p.122.

People's Union was organized, a convention meeting for that purpose in the Boise church, October 13 and 14, 1897. The writer was impressed by the fact that in the account of the organization very few genuine young people are noted as being given any responsibility in the new society, all the officers seemingly being older people, most of them pastors or their wives. Weber, although an elderly man, was elected the first state president.[12] Although Weber seems to have been well liked by the Boise church, his pastorate was a brief one. He resigned, effective March 3, 1899, to take a pastorate in another State.

The church was without a pastor for eight months until Rev. C. R. Baker of La Pierre, Michigan, accepted its unanimous call and took up his work on November 1, 1899. Rev. L. W. Gowen describes him as "an eloquent speaker and of devout spirit." Apparently he had the ability to talk on the level of the common man for the following anecdote has been preserved about him:

> "A cowboy recently paid Pastor Baker... this compliment: 'That's the best sky pilot I ever heard in Boise. He first corrals 'em and then goes after 'em. If he stays there and keeps up that lick I'll brand the best calf in my bunch for him.'"[13]

During Baker's pastorate a more adequate parsonage, costing $2400, was built, work for which was begun on April 1, 1901. He was a power in the city, being constantly in demand as a speaker and served as a regent of the University of Idaho at Moscow.[14] He closed his work July 29, 1906.

15. See A History of the First Baptist Church of Nampa, prepared for 50th Anniversary by Mrs. C. D. Witherspoon.

16. Book of Clippings, pp. 23, 24.

But the Boise church was not the only spot where Baptist history was being made during the closing part of the span of forty years covered by this thesis. The work was also going forward in other places, and new work was started. For example, while L. W. Gowen was pushing the work so whole-heartedly in Boise, he also found time to do field work in the Boise Valley, and he organized a church of 23 members near what is now known as Eagle, on March 16, 1889. For a time he served the church as he was able in connection with his work at Boise, but finally found it too much for him, and turned the work over to T. H. Lydston by agreement with the Home Mission Board of the Association. Rev. Mr. Lydston served this church and the one which had been organized at Nampa on April 2, 1892, by Rev. J. O. Burroughs with nineteen members following a series of meetings. Mr. Burroughs, then serving as district missionary, had come to Nampa and rented a meeting-hall which stood where the Eagle's Hall now stands, and had commenced Baptist work with an evangelistic campaign which resulted in seven baptisms. These seven and twelve others were the charter members of the Nampa church. In the evening of the day the church was organized, Rev. L. W. Gowen preached for them at services which were held in the Episcopal church.[15] Within a year a building had been secured, even though at the time of organization this appeared impossible because the membership was so poor.[16] Burroughs served the church as pastor until the Association meeting in September when

17. Ibid., p. 89.

18. See Witherspoon, Mrs. C. D., op. cit.

19. The Pacific Baptist, Volume 19, Number 40, (October 3, 1895) p. 3.

Lydston was asked to take it over in addition to the work with the Boise Valley Church. Sometime later the building was moved to the site now occupied by the Buick Used Car lot. In 1898, Rev. B. F. Hampton was called by the church to relieve Mr. Lydston,[17] serving it in conjunction with the work at Caldwell. Mr. Hampton was a young man well beloved by the Nampa and Caldwell people. His promising ministry was cut short by death November 11, 1899, which was a shock to Baptists throughout the area. In 1905 the original building was sold, and the building the church worshipped in until 1940 was erected under the pastorate of Rev. N. S. Holcroft.[18]

We know more about the Boise Valley Church. Its members were all poor folk also, mostly farmers, yet they were determined to have a church building. The following item, taken from the Pacific Baptist illustrates just how far they were willing to go in order to have a church in which to worship:

> "The brethren of Boise Valley Church, some twelve miles below Boise City, are to build a house of worship at once. About $800 in cash and pledges have been secured. The lumber has been sawed and the brethren will soon haul it from the mill, more than fifty miles away. It will take about four days to make a trip. A man will take a four-horse team and bring about 1600 feet of lumber at a load. It will mean much to bring 15,000 feet of lumber that far. This will reveal to some of our readers the difficulties of church building in the West and the consecrated pluck of those who build them. It needs to be said in this connection that that old veteran, Rev. T. H. Lydston, is the pastor."[19]

The church had met June 22, 1895, to form a building committee which had immediately gone forward with plans

which it presented to the church on August 15, 1895, at which time the church had voted to start immediate construction. The building proceeded that fall and winter, and the church was ready to be dedicated early in the spring. Evangelist W. A. Lindsay, who had been conducting meetings at Boise and Nampa, preached the dedicatory sermon on March 22, 1896.

This Boise Valley Church was an outgrowth of monthly preaching services which had been conducted in the Cox School House since as early as 1882, by pastors of the Boise Church. For several years prior to the organization of the church, several Baptist families living in Green Meadow Precinct, of which the school district was a part, had held membership in the First Baptist Church at Boise. From time to time the question had been raised about organizing a church of their own, but nothing had been done about it until a series of meetings conducted by the Methodist and Baptist pastors of Boise at Cox School during February, 1889, had produced sixteen conversions and brought matters to a head. The need of a church in the area was felt most keenly then, and at a prayer meeting which Gowen held on March 13, 1889, at the school house the members of the Boise church asked letters of dismissal to organize a new church. Gowen returned that Saturday with the letters and proceeded to organize the church. Those members with letters from Boise are considered the charter members of the church. They were as follows: Mr. and Mrs. John Wood, Mr. and Mrs. T. H. B. Beshears, Martin S. Cobb, Mary A. Barnes, Mrs. Mackland, Mrs. Caldona

20. See Church History as taken from Minute Book.

21. Anonymous, Baptist History of South Idaho, p. 14.

22. Ibid., p. 39.

Farmer. These eight, together with fifteen of the converts, provided the beginning constituency of this daughter church of the First Baptist Church in Boise.[20]

Chronologically speaking, the beginnings of the work in another of the fields entered by Baptists, Middle Valley, ought to have been told in connection with the chapter on the coming of the railroads, for work in the valley dates as far back as does work in towns like Eagle Rock and Blackfoot. However, a railroad did not come into the territory until 1900 when the Idaho Northern built north from Nampa but passed by the town of Salubria by a distance of two miles, thus condemning that town to eventual extinction as the new town of Cambridge on the railroad took its place as the shopping and trading center for the area. The story of work in Middle Valley dates back sixteen years to 1884 when Rev. Anderson Hopper, assisted by Colporter A. F. Willard, organized a church of four members on March 9, 1884.[21]

Mr. Hopper came to Middle Valley in July, 1883, from Missouri. He was born in Kentucky in 1836 and had been converted in 1857, uniting with the Rolling Prairie church in Mercer County, Missouri. He was licensed to preach by that church in 1860, and ordained to the gospel ministry by the East Fork church in the same county of March 3, 1867.[22] In the fall of 1883, Hopper organized a Sunday Shool in the "Shoe Peg District" of Middle Valley, and thus had the work well under way when Willard arrived to help him organize the church in the spring of 1884. The new Middle Valley Church

25. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 8, Number 3, (March, 1886) p. 59.

was growing. Hopper in writing East in the forepart of 1886, had this to say concerning his field:

> "At every point on our field of labor, except at Weiser and Salmon Meadows, we encounter the dramshop. It is with heavy heart that the minister must preach within sight and hearing of a saloon, filled with drinking and profane men on the Lord's day. At one point we preached in a small, poorly furnished school-house to one man and a few women and children. Fifteen rods away was a well-furnished saloon filled with men and boys. The next Sunday preached in another valley. The house of Satan was near at hand. It was not closed, but we rejoiced that this time there was a larger congregation in the house of God. The next Sunday we preached in still another valley. Here the customary dispenser of misery closed his doors and came to the meeting. We thanked him, and he replied that he had not forgotten his mother yet. In one town I was told the Baptist Church numbered about as many members as there were saloons in the place.
>
> "Sabbath Desecration--This is another great hindrance to missionary work. It is rather discouraging to the missionary, after he has ridden twenty or thirty miles, to stand in the school-house yard and see reapers and headers cutting down the grain and hear the threshing machine humming in the distance. And when the harvest is over and you begin to hope for better things, you are told that on this particular Sabbath the men have all gone on a grand hunt. Sometimes the boys are running horses and firing their pistols to the extent that the minister may well feel his life is in some danger. Even the Christians become so careless that in most of these valleys the Lord's Day is like any other day."[25]

As indicated by the above quotation, Hopper did not confine his work to Middle Valley alone, but preached in other places some distance from his home. One of these regular preaching stations was Salubria, located in Pine Creek Valley some ten miles to the north. After a protracted meeting held there by Mr. Hopper and Uncle Sammy Applegate, a

26. Minutes of First Idaho Association, 1885.

27. Spriggs, op. cit., p. 151

church was organized with four members by those two men on June 8, 1885. Before the Association meeting that year five others were added to its membership, one of them by baptism. This person was E. E. Hunt, husband of the Mrs. Hunt who took such an active part in the early work at Weiser. They seemed to have moved from Weiser into Pine Creek Valley during the winter of 1884-1885, and from that time on, after Mr. Hunt's conversion, both of these people took an active part in Baptist work at Salubria. The church joined the Association in 1885, sending as its messenger, H. A. Crowell, who received the right hand of fellowship for the church.[26]

Mr. Hopper seems not to have been able to keep regular appointments to preach for this church at Pine Creek. There was an elderly Baptist minister, a Rev. John Moore, living in the neighborhood, and he preached as often as his health allowed. In 1887, Rev. T. H. Lydston served the church briefly,[27] but in 1888 the church was again without a pastor. However, the church continued to report to the Association although it did not always send official delegates. In 1888 and 1889 it reported fifteen members and Mrs. Mary E. Hunt as Clerk. The church did not report in 1890 although Noah Ross, a licentiate from Salubria and E. E. Hunt were there as visitors. From 1889 on the church seems to have dwindled from neglect until the coming of Rev. E. N. Elton from Fort Collins, Colorado, in 1891. He settled at Salubria to serve both Salubria and Middle Valley. Mr. Hopper seems to have kept the work going at Middle Valley

28. Anonymous, op. cit., p. 14.

29. The Sentinel (February 9, 1893) as preserved in Book of Clippings, p. 35.

in much better fashion. "In 1888 it had about half a dozen non-resident members, and from a total membership of about 60 an attendance of about 50 or more was the rule at regular services."[28] Mr. Hopper resigned in 1890 as pastor at Middle Valley, apparently because he felt that he was not well enough educated to carry on the work, and that his health no longer permitted it.

The Rev. E. N. Elton was a fortunate choice for this field. Although not a driver, he was patient, persevering, and a hard worker. With his own two hands, almost alone, he erected churches at both places. The churches did not see the spectacular growth under his leadership that they had experienced in the first years, but they did continue to grow, slowly but surely. When Elton arrived he discovered that almost half of the membership at Middle Valley were Campbellites, so he immediately moved to remedy the situation by arranging for these brethren to withdraw quietly and form their own church. He then proceeded to reorganize the church and found that he had thirty-three like-minded persons with whom to work.[29] After this purging the church at once began to develop a spirit of unity and harmony not had there for several years.

At Salubria, Elton found the lack of a meeting house a very serious obstacle, and at once took steps to overcome this handicap. When he arrived there he found the church meeting in a school house about a quarter of a mile from town. But the roads were often very bad, which did not encourage good attendance, so a room in town was secured. Con-

30. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 14, Number 3 (March, 1892.)

cerning the furnishing of this room and his subsequent labors to build a meeting house, Elton wrote:

> "We borrowed a stove and a few chairs. Secured some undressed planks, out of which we made temporary seats; bought pipe, put up our lamps, and so we arranged a pleasant room for the meetings.
>
> "Late last Saturday afternoon the stove we had borrowed was taken away, having been sold. Consequently we could have no services on Sunday. Have now bought and put up a stove, and have made benches with backs, which make very comfortable seats, and which, though not handsome, will serve a good purpose until the church shall be able to put in better seats. This gives us the best room we have yet had in which to hold services; and being in the village and on the floor is most convenient. I anticipate better congregations in consequence.
>
> "During the past quarter I have, in some directions, worked very hard and to the full extent of my muscular strength and physical endurance, often almost to exhaustion. Going to the hills I dug with pick, stone for the foundation of our meeting-house, dug a trench for the foundation, hauled the sand and helped lay the foundation wall, hauled the timbers for the frame from the saw-mill, so far as they were ready, framed them, laid the sills and most of the floor joists.
>
> "I am disappointed in not getting the frame up and roof on, as I had hoped to do, so as to be able to work on the inside during the cold weather, but the work has been carried as far as the material for the building could be had. I hope to resume work as soon as the weather will permit."30

We do not know just when this church was completed. There is a cut of it in the Home Mission Monthly for July, 1897, on page 270. In 1896, Elton began work on a meeting house for the congregation at Middle Valley, and here again he was chief carpenter. The church was finished in time to be dedicated by L. G. Clark on Wednesday, September 22,

31. The Home Mission Monthly, Volume 19, Number 11, (November, 1897) p. 381.

32. Book of Clippings, p. 100.

1897, just before the convening of the First Association at Salubria on the following day. Reporting on his labors in building the church and the service of dedication, Elton wrote:

> "This has been an exceedingly busy quarter. The building of a chapel in Middle Valley has occupied my time and strength very largely, as I was the carpenter-in-chief. I report the house finished, but there are three or four days of carpenter work yet to do. The Association convened at Salubria this year, and to give our visiting brethren the pleasure of participating, and to avail ourselves of our General Missionary's assistance, we held the dedicatory services of the new chapel on the evening preceding the meeting of the Association, and shall, of course, hold our regular services in the chapel from this time on. I expect to return and complete the building next week.
>
> "The house is a neat building 24x36 feet, and by crowding will seat about 150. Just what the cost is I cannot say, but I have approximated its value at $500."[31]

Elton continued to serve the church for two more years, although the report was circulated that he intended to resign in 1897.[32] Failing health was probably the reason why he considered such a move, but the needs of the parish kept him on the job until death relieved him of his earthly responsibilities October 29, 1899. L. W. Gowen, reviewing his work in Idaho, wrote this tribute shortly after his death:

> "Nearly ten years ago Rev. E. N. Elton came from Fort Collins, Colorado where he had been pastor of the Baptist church six years and became missionary pastor of the Salubria and Middle Valley Baptist churches in South Idaho. The churches were small and weak, without houses of worship or parsonages. One of the churches was practically dead and the other was largely composed of people of another faith who shortly after withdrew and organized themselves. The new minister received scant encouragement the first year and still scantier financial support. The

33. Book of Clippings, pp. 100, 101.

34. Tidings from Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society, Volume 15, Number 6, (February, 1896) p. 11.

> pastor was not a vigorous man in body. Several years service in the army had seriously and permanently injured his health, but he had one quality that began after awhile to show itself in a marked manner--perseverance. After he had been at Salubria a few years the writer visited him and found a beautiful white church edifice had been erected, principally by the pastor's own hands. Two or three years later another house of worship stood as a beacon on a little hill in Middle Valley. A five-room parsonage was built at Salubria and the various structures were paid for. There had been no noise, no great demonstration, no begging tours. That unpretentious pastor had simply kept steadily at work when he was not too sick to work. Souls were saved also. No great sweeping revivals with additions by scores, but here and there one or two, perhaps four or five were baptized. He loved God and walked with God and on the 29th of October, 1899 God took him. For nearly fifteen years the Baptist ministry of South Idaho has been untouched by the hand of death but now a highly esteemed and deeply loved pastor has entered the well-earned rest. Brother Elton was 57 years of age and has had three pastorates, two of about ten years each and one of six years. He was a noble man, a deeply consecrated Christian minister."[33]

His daughter, Carrie Elton Over, a Baptist Missionary Training School graduate, who served briefly under the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society as a missionary at Pocatello and then at Salubria, but who had to resign because of ill health,[34] supplied the churches for awhile after her father's death.

Sometime in 1901, Rev. B. C. Cook was appointed by the Home Mission Society to take over Elton's field. Cook settled in the new railroad town of Cambridge, where a Baptist church was organized in May, 1901, with ten members. So great was the impact of the railroad on the other two churches, that even then, despite the long years of service Elton had given them, Cook reported that Cambridge "is our

35. Book of Clippings, p. 119.

most hopeful field of labor. We have a nice house of worship, recently erected at a cost of $1,000. It is seated with chairs, has good light and heat."[35] Within a year after Cook took over the field there were twenty-two members in the church at Cambridge and it was still growing. Mr. Cook, assisted by the general missionary, Rev. L. G. Clark, organized another church in this area at a school house four miles from the town of Council in August, 1901. In November, 1901, Cook conducted special meetings at the school house, and eight members were added to the six constituent members. This church was known as the Council Valley church and eventually moved into the town of Council. However, the church was unable to withstand the ravages of time and was dropped from the records a few years later.

As intimated at the beginning, the church at Salubria eventually fell by the way-side also. The new age was built around the railroad, and the town was unable to survive the blow dealt it when the railroad passed it by. However, Elton's work lives on today in Middle Valley where the present Midvale church is actively at work.

Developments in other churches are listed briefly in the following paragraphs.

Blackfoot: In 1895 L. W. Gowen, who had served so acceptably at Boise became pastor of this church, serving it for three years until he resigned to accept the position of Colporter for the American Baptist Publication Society.

36. Book of Clippings, p. 64.

While at Blackfoot, Gowen preached at three different places in the country besides at the Fort Hall Indian School, the State Insane Asylum, and the Ross Fork Indian Agency.[36] Rev. A. F. O. Chapman, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, was called by the church as Gowen's successor. Gowen continued to make Blackfoot his headquarters for colporter work, although he was not present much of the time in his home. His daughter, a teacher in the grade school, continued to be active in the church.

Eagle Rock (Idaho Falls): In July, 1892, Rev. Mr. Van Englen resigned in order to attend school and within a month the church called Rev. W. E. Sawyer at a salary of $700, $300 to be paid by the church, and the balance by the Home Mission Society. However, Mr. Sawyer was forced to resign the pastorate after serving not quite a year and the church called Van Englen for a second time. During this second pastorate, which lasted four years, Mr. Van Englen began work at the Jarnigan school house. Van Englen resigned to take up work at Great Falls on April 29, 1896, and the church called Rev. George E. Baker to take his place. On September 20, 1896, a church was organized at the Jarnigan school, the work out there being known as the Providence Mission. Twelve members took their letters from the Idaho Falls Church to the new Providence Church. Mr. Baker resigned after serving for only a year, and was followed after almost a year in which the church was pastorless, by Rev. Mr. Kyle who took up work in November, 1898. On

37. From data collected by Worth D. Wright for 50th Anniversary, taken from Church Record Books.

38. Book of Clippings, p. 83.

39. Ibid., p. 96.

September 27, 1899, the Providence church was dissolved and its members received back into the parent church. Mr. Kyle resigned, effective October 1, and he was followed by Mr. Pierce and Rev. W. M. Collins, neither of whom could stay for more than a year because of poor health. On February 1, 1902, Rev. A. G. Miller accepted the pastorate.[37]

Pocatello: Rev. A. H. Lyons, the first pastor of the church, resigned his pastorate after a fruitful five years of labor to accept the call of the North Yakima Baptist Church. During the period of his service the church completed its building, bought an organ, built a neat parsonage, put in a baptistery and fenced the lot. The church also raised $3500 for various purposes and increased in membership from fourteen to forty-four.[38] Rev. George Rich, who had recently left the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal church after a study of the scriptures on the subject of Baptism, was called by the Pocatello church to succeed Mr. Lyons. Under his leadership the church gradually paid off its indebtedness and made several valuable improvements to its property. Due to poor health, Mr. Rich resigned his pastorate after two years of service and his place was taken by Rev. Henry Van Englen, who came to take up the work having resigned his pastorate at Great Falls, Montana, on November 5, 1899.[39]

Caldwell: Rev. L. W. Gowen served the church for about a year after Rev. I. S. Hicks resigned because of the poor health of his family, and then Gowen resigned to take up the work at Blackfoot. After this the church shared the

40. History of First Baptist Church of Caldwell, 1876-1942, by Mrs. O. E. Gipson.

services of Rev. B. F. Hampton with the Nampa church until his untimely death. About this time it was decided to move the building to a more central location, the town having grown away from the church since its erection several years before. Lots were bought and the church building moved to the corner of Kimball and Albany Streets. Rev. D. G. Murray followed Hampton as pastor, serving both Caldwell and Middleton. The Middleton church had been organized in 1895, taking with it several persons who had helped not a little in the Caldwell church. The withdrawal of the Middleton members to form a church of their own was a severe blow to the Caldwell church and it felt keenly the loss.[40] Rev. W. G. Agee came to the church in 1904, following Mr. Murray. That year the church reported a membership of fifty-four to the Association.

Payette: In 1892, Rev. T. H. Lydston, who had served this church so well gave up the work at Payette to concentrate on Boise Valley and Nampa and Rev. W. Sanford Gee served the church along with Weiser until called to the pastorate of the Third Church in Portland. A parsonage was built during his stay, and the church found it quite a struggle to clear it of debt. Late in 1893, Rev. R. Pearse accepted the call to take Gee's place. He had come to that part of the country on a visit from the east but was so impressed with it and the spiritual needs of the people that he decided to remain, resigning his pastorate in Kane, Pennsylvania. Pearse had come originally from England in 1872.

In 1896, Rev. G. W. Black became pastor, followed by Rev. J. R. Yount and Rev. J. M. Skinner. In 1900, Rev. T. S. Dulin began a six year pastorate which was marked by several important happenings and much real growth. In 1901, under Dulin's leadership and encouraged by Lydston, who was again living in Payette, the church began a campaign to raise money for a building fund. 1902 was a memorable year. The pastor began to give full time to Payette (he had been giving part-time to Malheur County, Oregon, having organized the Ontario Baptist Church). In May an additional lot was purchased to the north of the old building, and in October the school house which the church was using as its building was moved to the new lot and faced west. The building was rented to the school district for use on school days. In November the foundation for the new building was laid. On February 13, 1903, during school hours and in sub-zero weather the building caught fire and burned to the ground. The teacher, Miss Johnson, and Mrs. Dulin managed to save the organ, pulpit and a few hymnals. All else was lost. This was a terrible blow to the church but it resolved to push its building campaign anyway. While they were without a building they met in Lammes Hall on Sunday mornings and at Pleasant View school house in the afternoons. In November they began meeting in the old Methodist church building, then being used as an armory.

On November 16, 1903, the cornerstone of the new building was laid. In it were placed a Bible, a copy of

41. Data taken from History of Payette Baptist Church prepared by Mrs. E. M. Dean for 50th Anniversary.

the Payette Independent, one of the Pacific Baptist, and some church records. On May 18, 1904, the first prayer meeting was held in the new building, not yet completed, and on May 22, regular church services began to be held. In September of that year Payette entertained the Association and reported a membership of 109. On the last day of the Association meeting the church was formally dedicated (September 25, 1904). The completion of the church seemed like a miracle to the people and the pastor for all were poor. Rev. L. G. Clark, Rev. W. H. Bowler, and Rev. L. W. Gowen took an especial interest in the project and went out of their way to encourage the congregation. Gowen gave about $50 toward the building, proceeds of lectures which he delivered. Many of the members contributed time as well as money. The Home Mission Society gave $500 and loaned $250. The Ladies Aid raised $100 and friends in various places gave to the amount of $500, and the Baptist churches at Boise, Weiser, Mountain Home, Shoshone, Idaho Falls and Pocatello all contributed towards the fund, as did the Pleasant View Aid Society.[41]

Weiser: Rev. A. H. Lyons came from Blackfoot to serve the Weiser church for a year before he accepted the call to the Pocatello church. During that year $400 was raised toward the church debt and improvements made on the church. Sanford Gee and R. Pearse followed Lyons, serving Payette as well as Weiser. During Pearse's pastorate the

42. Book of Clippings, p. 124.

church building was moved from the "old town" which had been missed by the railroad to a spot nearer "new town" and the newly erected school building. A parsonage was erected next door to the church costing $400, during the pastorate of G. W. Black. Rev. D. C. Williams followed Black on the field, and under his leadership the church continued to make spiritual growth and improvements on its property. His work was handicapped, however, by the poor health of his wife and of himself. He resigned, March 17, 1901, to take up the work at Garfield, Washington. During his twenty and one-half months' service, twenty persons were added to the membership by baptism and nineteen by letter and experience. He left a membership of eighty-seven, quite a number of which were young people.[42] Rev. C. R. Delepine followed him as pastor of the church, and kept up the good work so that the church was able to report a membership of one hundred eleven to the Association meeting with Payette in 1904.

The Fourth Annual Session of the First Idaho Association meeting at Boise, October 4 to 7, 1883, elected a Home Mission Board that made the first cooperative agreement with the American Baptist Home Mission Society. After its election this board, composed of Rev. L. L. Shearer, Rev. S. W. Applegate, D. P. Maryatt, Jr., Rev. B. F. Morrow and C. Ellsworth, "immediately met and organized and began correspondence with Dr. H. L. Morehouse, Corres. Sec'y of the A.B.H.M.S....As a result articles of cooperation were adopted similar to those under which we are now working....The financial

43. Gowen, L. W., op. cit., as quoted in Spriggs, op. cit., p. 105.

44. See "Articles of Cooperation" in Minutes of First Idaho Association, 1904, pp. 5, 6.

45. Minutes of First Idaho Association, 1904, p. 15.

pro-rata was $3 from the Society for $1 raised in the state, or an expenditure of four times what should be raised..... by the Association Board."43

As nearly as we have been able to ascertain, this agreement stood until the latter part of 1899 when a new agreement was made. Under the new agreement the Home Mission Society, up to a limit of $2,500, agreed to expend ten dollars in South Idaho to every one dollar raised on the field. The management of missionary matters under the new agreement was placed in the hands of a State Home Mission Board, of which Rev. L. W. Gowen, then living in Boise, was secretary, and Rev. L. G. Clark, of Helena, Montana, was general missionary and was to give one-fourth of his time to South Idaho. This agreement was to be in effect for the fiscal year ending August 31, 1900. This agreement was not only to apply to monies paid out for missionaries' salaries, but the 10 to 1 ratio was also to apply to grants from the church edifice fund, "as may be practicable."44

However, as a matter of fact, the Home Mission Society as early as 1903 was appropriating more than $2,500 for mission work in the State, and the State Board was raising more than the $250 required under the agreement. "The Home Mission Society has appropriated for work in South Idaho, for year beginning Sept. 1, 1904, the sum of $3,500 with the understanding that an additional $1,000 be raised in the State for State Missions."45 The existence of the coopera-

46. Book of Clippings, p. 103.

47. Minutes of First Idaho Association, 1904, p. 17.

tive agreement served to give the State Board something to work on and provide a better basis for collecting funds. Just how well it worked out is illustrated by the monies collected. The first year Rev. L. G. Clark "undertook to raise the money on the field, and at a meeting of the state board had the pleasure to report the needed amount raised and some to spare."[46] Probably about $300 was raised the first year under the agreement; yet for the fiscal year ending September 25, 1904, the fourth year of the agreement, the treasurer's report showed $708.30 contributed by the churches to the State Mission Fund.[47] The success of the agreement enabled the boards to hire W. H. Bowler as district missionary to supplement L. G. Clark's work, and this in turn enabled the boards to do a much better job of pushing Baptist work in the State.

The report presented to the American Baptist Home Mission Society for Southern Idaho in 1904 read as follows:

> "In Southern Idaho we have twenty-seven churches with a total membership of 1,250. One new church was organized during the past year (at Market Lake, now Roberts) and two new houses of worship have been erected, although they are not yet fully completed. Besides the work done by the District Missionary, Rev. W. H. Bowler, and the General Missionary, we have had eleven missionary pastors at work the whole, or a part of the year. We still have only one self-supporting church, Boise City, but this is a strong church and Dr. C. R. Baker encourages it to do much for our State work.
>
> "Rev. W. H. Bowler, District Missionary, has assisted most of the churches in special meetings during the year. At the annual meetings, 160 additions were reported, 60 of these by baptism. Some recent meetings have resulted in a number of conversions, but exact figures cannot

48. Annual Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1904.

> be secured at present. The outlook in Idaho is encouraging for our cause. The state in some sections is settling up very fast, and we need to enlarge our work. We ought to build one or two new houses of worship next year, and occupy two or three new fields.
>
> "The benevolent work of our churches is commendable, and the pastors and churches as a rule, are doing heroic self-sacrificing work for the evangelization of the state."48

Thus, at the close of the forty year period covered by this history, we can see an organization perfected, able to carry on in a fitting manner Baptist work in the State, and able to protect Baptist interests much more effectively than was possible under the old "hit or miss" lack of system in effect the first twenty years that Baptist work was done in the State.

We close this history with a tribute to these pioneer Baptist workers whose labors for the Lord we have attempted to describe in the preceding pages. Their faithful devotion to the Baptist cause effectively laid a foundation for future work, so that the next forty years saw a much more rapid growth in the Baptist work. (At this writing Baptists number over 8,000 in the State.) We praise God for them and the work they started. The heritage they have passed on to this and succeeding generations is something that no one needs to be ashamed of!

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